United Nations E/2015/68

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
24 April 2015

Original: English

2015 session
21 July 2014-22 July 2015
Agenda item 5 (c)
High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: what it will take

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the transformative, united and universal post-2015 development agenda integrating the sustainable development goals will be a historic opportunity to advance global development. The present report, provided in response to General Assembly resolutions 61/16 and 68/1, explores what it will take to manage this important transition. It is emphasized that policy integration based on the three dimensions of sustainable development will need to become the new operational standard, supported by a greater emphasis on achieving integration and coherence across actors and sectors. It is suggested that institutions at all levels will need to undertake adaptations to implement the new development agenda, requiring a fundamental shift in mindsets and attitudes accompanied by strong leadership and vision. Emphasis is laid on the importance of ensuring that the efforts of the growing diversity of development actors are effectively aligned with the objectives of the post-2015 development agenda and the underpinning revitalized global partnership for sustainable development. It is also stressed that a multi-tiered and inclusive follow-up and review of implementation will be required to ensure an effective exchange of experiences, advancement of progress and ownership and engagement by all development stakeholders.

15-06440 (E) 070515

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The adoption by the General Assembly in September 2015 of a unified and universal post-2015 development agenda integrating the sustainable development goals will mark a transformation in the global development paradigm. The agenda's overriding twin objectives will be to eradicate poverty and complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals while making a transition to and advancing sustainable development. The agenda will bring together poverty eradication and the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — into a unified and universal development framework. The agenda will be for all countries, leaving no one behind while protecting the planet.

2. The Millennium Development Goals provided a compelling framework to address the needs of the world's poorest people. Yet the Goals have not encompassed all the issues covered by the conferences and summits that make for a more broad-based, integrated sustainable development. The transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals will require a clear vision of the implications and preparedness at all levels and among all partners for their implementation.

3. The international community faces a very different set of development challenges at the outset of the post-2015 era than when the United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted in 2000. The new agenda will be implemented in the context of the growing interdependence of countries and global development action. Globalization and interdependence have opened up remarkable opportunities for development but also extraordinary needs, given that many people have been excluded from their positive impacts. In addition, the world has seen food, energy, financial, health and environmental challenges across countries in the past decade, amplifying global systemic risks. They have had far-reaching consequences for all countries and local communities.

4. In this context, achieving poverty eradication and sustainable development will require significant transformations at all levels. These will include the strengthening of policy integration and coherence, adaptation by institutions, fostering of effective multi-stakeholder partnerships and enhancing follow-up and review of implementation, which are addressed herein.

5. The present report is complemented by the report of the Secretary-General for the 2015 thematic debate of the Economic and Social Council on strengthening and building institutions for policy integration in the post-2015 era (E/2015/69).

II. Evolution of global development policy from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals

6. In the landmark United Nations Millennium Declaration, heads of State and Government affirmed the international community's commitment to several important values, including freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. The subsequently formulated Millennium Development Goals became the key framework for advancing development with the primary emphasis on reducing extreme poverty and improving education and health

outcomes in developing countries. Environmental sustainability is addressed in Goal 7 and Goal 8 encapsulates the concept of a global partnership for development.

7. At the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002, countries recognized the importance of pursuing poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable development in a coherent manner. In the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, world leaders emphasized that, in an increasingly globalized, interdependent world economy, a holistic approach to the interconnected national, international and systemic challenges of financing for development was essential. They also called for a new partnership between developed and developing countries to realize the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

8. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in 2002, Governments further defined the concept of sustainable development as comprising three overarching objectives: poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns, and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development. A key message of the Summit was that those three objectives would need to be pursued in an integrated manner. Before 2002, the defining moment for sustainable development as a concept and global priority had been the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. The Earth Summit emphasized the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — and resulted in several international instruments that continue to provide the framework for sustainable development policies.

9. The high-level political commitment to sustainable development and the accompanying optimism at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 notwithstanding, the 1990s and 2000s paradoxically saw the separation, rather than the integration, of the economic, social and environmental pillars that characterized the sustainable development agenda.[1] The special session of the General Assembly to review and appraise the implementation of Agenda 21, held in New York in 1997, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development sought to keep sustainable development on the international development agenda, yet many agree that the implementation of their outcomes generally favoured the environmental dimension more than the other areas of sustainable development. Sustainable development became more synonymous with environmental sustainability than with the broad three-dimensional approach established at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

10. At the 2005 World Summit, world leaders committed themselves to the timely and full realization of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as all the international development goals agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits (see General Assembly resolution 60/1). The Economic and Social Council was entrusted with several new tools to pursue the integrated follow-up and review, including the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum.

[1] Kate Higgins and Helen J. Chenard, "Rio+20: what might it mean for international development?" (North-South Institute, June 2012). Available from www.nsi-ins.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/2012-Rio20-what-it-might-mean-for-international-development.pdf.

11. The global financial crisis of 2008 brought to the fore the increasing need for inclusive, collective action, in particular through measures for global macroeconomic policy coordination. The crisis and its aftermath pointed to the increasing interconnectedness of economic and social development issues and the need to address them through global norms and rule setting, such as by the rights-based approach to development and coordination in international trade and development. The threat of climate change to global prosperity and security has also triggered recognition of the need to further strengthen the integration of environmental sustainability into the international development architecture and global action.

12. Taken together, those concerns influenced the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, on the need to advance poverty eradication within the context of sustainable development. A major achievement of Conference was to bring sustainable development back to the centre of global policymaking. Member States recognized that the world faced a situation where continued and sustained human progress was contingent on their collective ability to reduce economic volatility and address social disparities within and between countries, while simultaneously limiting environmental deterioration.

13. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), Member States also agreed to strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable development. They called upon the Assembly to further integrate sustainable development as a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities. They reaffirmed the role of the Economic and Social Council for policy review, dialogue and recommendations on economic and social development, as well as its key role in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and coordinating the United Nations system (ibid., paras. 82 and 83). In addition, they established the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Assembly and the Council, to provide political leadership and recommendations for sustainable development (ibid., paras. 81-84).

14. The outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development initiated the elaboration of sustainable development goals to be coordinated and coherent with the processes to consider the post-2015 development agenda, which is expected to be adopted at the United Nations summit in September 2015. The agenda is currently being elaborated through informal consultations of the General Assembly.

15. There have been numerous inputs to this process, notably: the set of 17 goals and 169 targets proposed by the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970 and Corr.1), which will be the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda; the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (A/69/315); the General Assembly dialogues on technology facilitation; and other related United Nations intergovernmental processes and events. The Assembly called upon the Secretary-General to synthesize the full range of inputs and present a synthesis report, which has served as a contribution to the intergovernmental negotiations in the lead up to the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (see A/69/700).

III. Pursuing policy integration for a unified development agenda

A. Imperatives of policy integration

16. The broadening of the development agenda, including the proposed sustainable development goals, is a significant transformation in global development policy. Actions to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development are interdependent and require integrated policy responses that maximize opportunities for synergy and balance trade-offs. This is different from the Millennium Development Goals, for which actors generally pursued individual goals independently from one another.

17. The demand for policy integration will grow significantly with the transition to the post-2015 development agenda. Integration is at the core of sustainable development and the proposed sustainable development goals — the economic, social and environmental dimensions will need to be effectively integrated during policy formulation and in implementation. Policy integration will need to be carried out within and across sectors, and supported by policy coordination and coherence among national, regional and global development efforts.

18. In view of the interlinkages between sustainable development objectives, financing strategies should also be designed to use opportunities for synergy while taking account of potential trade-offs. The need for the integration of financing was highlighted by the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing.

19. According to analytical studies undertaken for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, a broad pursuit of sustainable development will perform better in terms of promoting global prosperity and equity while protecting the planet, when compared with a strategy based on achieving single-issue objectives in isolation.

20. For example, policy approaches can be tailored to support the objective of poverty eradication by integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. In Brazil, the Bolsa Verde programme, for example, addresses the economic, social and environmental dimensions through conditional cash transfers to indigenous and rural households in order to support ecological, sustainable livelihoods in regions that are environmentally sensitive.

21. Similarly, there are synergies among efforts towards expanding education, ensuring gender equality and enhancing women's employment. Women who participate in the workforce have been shown to reinvest their income in improved nutrition, health and education for household members, thus increasing living standards and reducing "non-income poverty". Better nutrition for all family members and reduced infant, child and maternal mortality are among the social gains from integrated employment policies that take into account the gender dimension. Women have also been supportive of more sustainable pathways, such as advocating bans on unsustainable products, better labelling of the environmental impacts of products and their production and showing support for green energy and comprehensive recycling programmes.

22. Policy integration and cooperation in the post-2015 era will also become a more complex undertaking than previously. Achieving sustainable food production,

for example, requires a host of interlinked activities, such as agronomic interventions to boost yields, investment in rural infrastructure, greater efficiency in water use and better choices in allocating additional land to agricultural production. Other similarly complex development challenges, such as sustainable urbanization, biodiversity protection and the shift to low-carbon energy systems, also require integrated policies and approaches.

23. Formulating and implementing integrated policies is also challenging and important for countries emerging from conflict or in vulnerable situations. Policy choices in this context and the competition for productive resources can create tension and lead to prolonged or additional conflicts.

24. Policy integration will also need to be pursued by all actors and stakeholders, public and private, including civil society, academic institutions and the private sector. An important challenge will be to ensure that the efforts of the growing diversity of development actors are effectively aligned to support policy integration, including within a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development. South-South cooperation among Governments has especially come to the fore as a significant force in development, and the number and type of public and private actors involved in development is also likely to continue to grow.

Integrated responses to global development challenges

25. In the past decade, the distinction between national and global development challenges has become less distinct as the process of globalization and interconnectedness of countries has accelerated. The world has seen an increasing trend of financial, health and environmental disruptions in one country cascading over national borders and amplified into systemic risks. This has meant that small locales and individuals can become globally significant, just as global events can have major consequences for the most remote locality or community. Information and communications technology, trade and financial transactions are the principal mediums for interconnectedness, giving rise to a new reality of interdependence in today's world.

26. The interdependence of development action means that areas will need to be pursued in combination in an integrated manner, rather than individually or sequentially. For example, the proposed sustainable development goal 1 (End poverty in all forms everywhere), establishes the income level of $1.25 per day as a minimum for everyone, to be accomplished by all countries by 2030, including through social protection systems (target 1.3) as well as global action to enhance the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters (target 1.5). Action to mitigate and adapt to climate change will therefore also be part of realizing goal 1.

27. In the post-2015 development agenda, efforts to realize both common and collective development challenges will become highly integrated. Examples of common development challenges at the country level include the provision of basic services in such areas as education, health, water, sanitation and disability services. Global development challenges, such as climate change impacts, biological diversity loss, ocean conservation and pandemics, affect every country and require collective action.

28. In the pursuit of the post-2015 agenda, the provision of basic needs and the global response to interlinked challenges will need to be advanced simultaneously and in an integrated manner. While continued strong provision of assistance for basic needs will be at the heart of the new agenda, developing countries will also continue to need support to allow them to benefit from globalization or enable them to deal with global collective challenges, including adaptation to climate change.

29. Realizing sustainable development objectives in this new era is therefore also about managing the interdependence of countries and of issues in an integrated manner. Post-2015, policy integration can be expected to play an important role in supporting all countries, in particular developing countries, to benefit from globalization and interdependence as well as to respond effectively to global development challenges.

B. Advancing policy integration: what it will take

National level

30. The realization of poverty eradication and sustainable development will require effective mechanisms at all levels to foster policy integration. There are numerous feasible pathways for advancing sustainable development, and measures and policies will need to be tailored to each issue and sector, as well as to each region and country, as applicable.

31. At the national level, various strategies have been prepared over the past two decades, including poverty reduction strategies and national sustainable development strategies, together with the establishment of related coordination and implementation bodies. In the post-2015 era, a revitalized process of formulating national sustainable development strategies through multi-stakeholder engagement can be expected to play a key role in the achievement of the universal development agenda.

32. A national sustainable development strategy has been defined as "a coordinated, participatory and iterative process of thoughts and actions to achieve economic, environmental and social objectives in a balanced and integrated manner".[2] In Agenda 21, world leaders called upon each country to develop a national sustainable development strategy. The Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda has also recommended that countries should establish their targets for contributing to the post-2015 sustainable development goals through participatory planning processes at the national level (see A/67/890, annex). National sustainable development strategies can integrate the global targets and selected indicators that will apply to all countries, as well as establish and integrate the additional indicators to be set at the national level taking into account country circumstances and progress.

33. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat identified 106 countries implementing a national sustainable development strategy in 2009, based on reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development. Through the

[2] See Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Guidance in preparing a national sustainable development strategy: managing sustainable development in the new millennium", background paper No. 13, prepared for the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002.

strategies, countries have identified priority actions that can deliver win-win outcomes in an integrated way for economic growth, employment creation, food security, access to essential services and climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as broader environmental outcomes, such as biodiversity protection and conservation. Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development was identified as a critical issue, along with the inclusion of all stakeholders and actors, coherent planning and decision-making at various levels, and implementation.

34. Policy integration can also be achieved through other overarching strategies guiding the various policies and through the way in which development plans and sectoral and other policies are designed and implemented. Integration should be sought from various avenues and at different levels, such as national and subnational, whenever feasible. In practice, strategic priorities will differ by country.

35. Supportive institutions are important for the implementation of national sustainable development strategies and integrated policies at the national level. Institutions need to promote the adoption of a holistic approach to achieving common targets and formulating policies that capture the interlinkages between sectors. Institutional structures may need to be reformed to support intersectoral cooperation and incentives will be needed for sectors to develop joint workplans towards common goals.

36. Several countries have taken steps to integrate policy by establishing national sustainable development commissions or similar bodies to advise the Government, review progress and promote public knowledge of, and support for, sustainable development in all its dimensions. Members often include multiple stakeholders, who can share their expertise to contribute to integrated policymaking. In some countries, a State planning commission or development commission is responsible for policy integration and integrated approaches.

37. Such integrated approaches include the "triple-win strategy", which seeks to achieve benefits across all three dimensions and serves to mainstream sustainable development into the policymaking process. Another example is the "nexus approach". The climate-land-energy-water-development nexus, for example, provides insights for policy integration targeting climate, land, energy and water and externalities on other sectors.

38. Several other instruments are available for policy integration, including laws and regulations, taxes and subsidies, and effective communication for promoting inclusive, integrated implementation. Given the complex interlinkages of contemporary development challenges, the assessment of impact, trade-offs and efficiency of policy tools is key to fostering resilience and knowledge creation about policy instruments that work. To leverage their impact, policy tools need be tailored to country-specific needs, circumstances and capacities.

39. In the post-2015 era, building national capacity is central for effective State ownership and the promotion of sustainable development. National statistical offices and planning agencies have a key role to play in providing the tools for the assessment of integrated policies at the national level. The United Nations development system can provide support through policy analysis, exchanges of a broad range of experiences on successful approaches to integration and capacity-building.

Regional level

40. At the regional level, the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals signals a much stronger role for regional entities, as reiterated in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want". Their role needs to be seen in the light of the implementation of the agenda through cross-sectoral cooperation and by focusing on transboundary, regional and subregional solutions, the measurement of progress through regional monitoring facilities and encouraging and building on regional analysis.

41. Regional platforms, including through the convening powers of the regional commissions, could help countries to translate global goals into policies, guidelines, recommendations and standards that can be implemented at the national level, as well as mobilize partnerships and promote South-South and interregional cooperation. Regional platforms could also enable countries that face similar development challenges to share lessons learned from the implementation of integrated policy approaches.

42. Regional platforms could support integrated policies and approaches, facilitate the sharing of information, knowledge and experiences and strengthen capabilities. This is likely to lessen the burden of global-level requirements and can support policy integration and strengthen integration between global analysis and national efforts. The regional level is also the natural platform to tackle regional, subregional or transboundary integration challenges, which are important aspects of sustainable development.

Global level

43. At the global level, addressing the growing interconnectedness of development challenges and the need for integrated policy approaches will require strong policy cooperation and the coherent contributions of global institutions.

44. The proposed sustainable development goals and targets reflect the integrated nature of the current development challenges. Translating them into specific strategies, programmes and initiatives will require an effective global system for furthering policy coherence at the intergovernmental level and system-wide to set and prioritize objectives, coordinate policy and implementation and conduct follow-up and reviews. Member States have mandated that such reviews, to be carried out by the high-level political forum on sustainable development, should build on the lessons from the national voluntary presentations, held in the context of the annual ministerial reviews of the Economic and Social Council, as well as other relevant existing review mechanisms.

45. Global institutional elements for furthering policy coherence in the post-2015 era are already in place. The capacity of the various global institutions will be critical for policy coherence. Effective global support will also depend on the political will to strengthen integration through a shift in mindset at the global level. That shift will need to take the form of engaging in policy dialogue that cut across sectoral or political interests with input from a cross section of groups.

46. The need for policy integration underlines the importance of a global environment that allows a broad range of stakeholders, who may not necessarily be natural partners, to share information and create knowledge that can be leveraged

for policymaking. Research and academic institutions have a vital role to play in developing instruments for policy integration. International and national civil society groups will continue to play an important role in promoting sustainable development, and the private sector will have a growing role in financing and implementation.

C. "Fit-for-purpose" United Nations development system

47. When the United Nations development system was first established, it was envisaged that development challenges would be primarily addressed at the sector level. The economic, social and environmental changes that accompanied globalization and the increased interconnectivity among countries were largely unforeseen.

48. In the post-2015 era, the United Nations development system will need to continuously adapt to support policy integration and coherence in the implementation of the new agenda. The transition to a unified and universal development agenda calls upon the system to encompass a broad range of issues relating to integration. Developing countries will require continued strong support at the country level. Other Member States will rely on the system primarily for tackling global challenges, coordination and the provision of norms and standards.

49. The United Nations system should use an integrated approach to capture synergies in programming and operations and should include a strong focus on partnerships with public and private actors. That approach is broader than that used in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in which the focus was placed mainly on setting goals and targets in the poorest countries and regions.

50. A universal agenda also means that the United Nations development system needs to identify means of engagement and implementation that allow it to have a universal and unified response to supporting policy integration and cooperation. The United Nations system will engage on integration with countries having a broad range of development experiences. The system's resource base will therefore need to be strengthened and diversified, with the introduction of new tools and technical capacity. The system will increasingly need to work as one, which will require it to develop a strong capacity for internal and external coordination. Several major initiatives, including "Delivering as one", are continuing.

51. Potential key functions of the United Nations development system in response to the integration requirements for the post-2015 development agenda and other key drivers of change include the following:

(a) Supporting better integrated and coordinated responses, at all levels, to national development challenges in a wide range of areas, including through United Nations intergovernmental bodies and inter-agency mechanisms;

(b) Conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, recovery and resilience-building;

(c) Support for addressing the challenges of, and drawing benefits from, globalization;

(d) Strengthening country-level responses to global and transboundary challenges, such as the protection of biological diversity and the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change;

(e) Support in norm-setting and standard-setting, in particular with regard to the human rights-based approach to development, inequality, addressing systemic risks and supporting implementation at all levels;

(f) Support for enhancing North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation;

(g) Guidance on policy integration.

52. The range of functions provided by the United Nations development system can be expected to grow in response to the interconnected development environment and differentiated demands of countries and will require considerable capacity, flexibility and expertise. The diversity of the system and its ability to provide support in an integrated and coordinated manner are key assets.

53. The Economic and Social Council dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system offers Member States a platform for forging a common vision to ensure that the system is "fit for purpose" for the broadening of its functions in the post-2015 era.

IV. Institutional requirements for the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals

A. Role of institutions

54. One of the key transformative changes of the post-2015 development agenda will be how the capacities of institutions and systems are either adjusted or created anew to support the translation of the new agenda's vision into practical and actionable legislation, policies and programmes at all levels.

55. In his synthesis report (A/69/700), the Secretary-General underscored the urgent need to recognize and address the trust deficit between Governments, institutions and people. He also emphasized that providing an enabling environment to build inclusive and peaceful societies, ensuring social cohesion and respect for the rule of law would require the rebuilding of institutions at all levels. The need to fill institutional gaps by introducing the necessary legal and policy reforms that will mediate the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals and support implementation, follow-up and review is well recognized in proposed sustainable development goal 16.

56. This continues the recognition of the fundamental need for effective institutions in maintaining sustained growth and contributing to poverty eradication and sustainable development. Undertaking institutional reforms involves modifying procedures and norms that may have been entrenched and difficult to change without resistance. The structural changes that will be necessary are examined in the report of the Secretary-General for the 2015 thematic debate of the Economic and Social Council (E/2015/69).

57. Integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development will require an integrated policy strategy or framework, such as a national sustainable development strategy, for all policymaking. While countries may not necessarily set up new centralized institutions or bodies to establish and oversee such a framework, an institutional structure that fosters coordination and integration will be necessary to ensure that the three dimensions are fully taken into account and integrated. This may require significant changes in institutional interactions and policymaking, as well as strong and focused institutional leadership.

58. Building effective institutions for sustainable development can be particularly challenging for conflict-affected countries. Once peace and stability are restored, making significant progress in poverty eradication and sustainable development requires restoring good governance and building the legitimate and effective institutions that are suitable to their specific contexts.

B. Institutions in the transition to the sustainable development goals

59. Institutional adaptation will be necessary to deliver on the sustainable development goals. The changes should be introduced at multiple levels to enable the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals in such a way that the gains made from implementing the Millennium Development Goals are sustained and consolidated. They should also facilitate the effective and successful implementation of the sustainable development goals by fostering national and international policy integration, collaboration, and coherence; resolving conflict; minimizing implementation constraints; and influencing and shaping the behaviour, preferences, capacities and strategies of key actors.

60. Changing mindsets and attitudes is critical in the adaptation and change of institutions. While institutions guide the behaviour and practice of individuals, groups and countries at all levels, they are also a product of the efforts of people, Governments and other stakeholders. It will therefore take a significant shift in the mindsets and attitudes of development actors to modify and create new institutional frameworks to effectively drive the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals. It also requires accepting a new vision and the challenges of implementing it and bringing together all available resources, including tools and operational plans and programmes, to undertake such a shift. The task should be seen as a collective effort to be undertaken at all levels, with the involvement of all stakeholders.

61. The issue of leadership and human resource capacity is central. Institutions require visionary leaders and capable staff who will take the appropriate actions necessary to lead transformation and implement the new commitments, which are key conditions for achieving the vision of the sustainable development goals.

62. The task of strengthening or creating institutions and systems is often complicated by low capacity, in particular in terms of the human, technological and financial resources required to implement such changes. The transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals will therefore require translating global aspirations and vision into well-resourced and practical regional, national and subnational priorities and programmes.

63. Appropriate legislation and policies may be needed to guide and support the mindset change that is required. In particular, public institutions responsible for managing the development process should be impartial and equipped with appropriate capacity and should function transparently. Those attributes could be enshrined in legislation and policy.

64. At the national level, institutional reforms must lead to outcomes that leave no one behind. Institutions must be accessible to all and respond to the needs of populations in both rural and urban areas. Legal reforms must aim to promote institutions and policies that provide access to justice and peaceful solutions. The rule of law must embed values, enable checks to the exercise of power, protect property rights, lower transaction costs and allow all citizens to own and make effective use of their assets.

65. A strong global cooperation and governance architecture, centred on the role of the United Nations in maintaining policy coherence, identifying new and emerging priorities and monitoring and tracking progress, is critical both for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and for shaping an ambitious post-2015 development agenda. The transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals demands a coherent and coordinated approach throughout the United Nations intergovernmental and inter-agency machinery.

66. This global development cooperation and governance system should also recognize that the United Nations operates in a broader context that includes other multilateral institutions and entities, regional development banks, as well as international, regional and bilateral trade and cooperation arrangements, all of which have different working methods. The interaction of this complex international institutional architecture contributes to tracking the achievement of development results.

67. The institutional requirements for creating synergies among public-private institutions to ensure integration and harmony in the support for delivering on a universal agenda have not yet been fully understood or determined. The Ebola crisis, for example, exposed fragilities in the institutional underpinnings of current structures, exposing a need to further develop national and international frameworks to foster sustainable and inclusive development in health systems. It showed a need to increase investment in strengthening African institutions.

68. At the regional and global levels, all relevant institutions will need to deepen their commitment to working more closely in support of country-led strategies and programmes and develop the capacity to work more flexibly in partnership with others in support of efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. For United Nations system organizations, this will mean partnerships both within and beyond the system and across a spectrum of issues, including economic, social, environmental, peace and security and human rights.

V. Revitalized global partnership for sustainable development

69. In the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals, the global partnership for sustainable development will need to be strengthened both in scope and depth to meet the demands of the new,

transformational agenda. In his synthesis report, the Secretary-General recognizes that there is a need for a revitalized global partnership for development, built on the foundations of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation), to support the delivery of an ambitious new sustainable development goal-based agenda for sustainable development. That global partnership should be built on strong political will and action and involve national and international, as well as public and private, constituencies as core elements of a transformational approach.

70. In addition, the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/279, called for a single, comprehensive, holistic and forward-looking approach, based on the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development: outcome document of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (General Assembly resolution 63/239, annex), for addressing the financing needs across the three dimensions of sustainable development, in order to reinforce coherence, facilitate coordination and avoid duplication of efforts.

71. The issues under consideration in the continuing intergovernmental negotiations in both the third International Conference on Financing for Development and the post-2015 development agenda process can build on lessons from the experience with the global partnership for development. This includes Millennium Development Goal 8, which has focused attention on the degree to which commitments were being realized on aid, trade, debt relief, access to information and communications technology and essential medicines, and other forms of support.

72. The proposals under discussion include issues of development cooperation under national resource mobilization and official development assistance, as well as systemic issues in finance, investment, technology transfer, trade and the overall enabling environment in both developing and developed countries. A more effective means of follow-up and review of the global partnership is also under consideration. Agreement thereon will demonstrate a historically unprecedented level of ambition that will require the strongest political commitment from the international community.

73. The successful implementation of a transformative post-2015 development agenda hinges upon a revitalized global partnership for development and the means of implementation. Such a partnership should mobilize the engagement of all stakeholders and the required amount of resources needed — national and international, public and private, through aid and trade, regulation, taxation and investment — to support the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Such efforts should be based on strong political will, solidarity, cooperation and mutual accountability.

74. The interlinkages in the global partnership between the various levels will also need to be taken into account. For example, although most of the world's deforestation is occurring in developing countries, often in very low-income countries, it is taking place to a significant extent to meet the needs for timber and other forest products of developed and some large emerging economies. The responsibility for the protection of resources, such as forests, lies not only with the

countries in which they are located but also with the international community as a whole.

75. Given the ambition of the post-2015 development agenda to support the implementation of a set of goals that spreads across all three dimensions of sustainable development, and with the overarching goal of eradicating poverty in all its forms everywhere, the current approaches to financing for development and other means of implementation will need to be better aligned and more coherent. The alignment of approaches to financing and other means of implementation will be central to the coordination and coherent management of resources at all levels, and for advancing on systemic issues that are key to achieving the ambitious new agenda. This is necessary to reduce transaction costs and promote synergy and to make it easier to track commitments, achieve transparency and ensure integrated and effective approaches to sustainable development.

76. The emergence of many global funds during the Millennium Development Goals era, such as those addressing various global environmental issues, are a manifestation of the growing recognition of the necessity of global cooperation on the basis of the principles of solidarity and universality. The need for this type of global cooperation will be even more important for the achievement of the post-2015 development agenda.

A. Multi-stakeholder partnerships: roles and responsibilities of partners

77. A clear distinction is now widely recognized in the analysis of partnerships: a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development and multi-stakeholder partnerships are complementary sides of an effective delivery support architecture for a poverty eradication and sustainable development agenda.

78. In the context of the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals, multi-stakeholder partnerships and engagement are seen as a key element of the transformative agenda. Their critical role notwithstanding, multi-stakeholder partners cannot replace the role, commitment and responsibility of Governments. Delivering on the ambitious, inclusive and universal post-2015 development agenda for all peoples and in all countries will be possible only with the involvement of all partners and stakeholders weaving together national, regional and global solutions to common development problems.

79. The resolve to develop strong voluntary partnerships with all development actors to contribute to solving global challenges derives from the United Nations Millennium Declaration and has been repeated at major United Nations conferences and summits, especially at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. This recognizes that the implementation of the mandates and goals set by the United Nations can best be achieved by leveraging catalytic partnerships with civil society, businesses, financial institutions, philanthropic foundations and academic and scientific institutions, as well as through full citizen involvement at the individual and group levels. Such partnerships will operate at the global, regional, national and subnational levels, including around issue-based coalitions.

80. In the transition to the sustainable development goals, it is important to clearly understand and define specific roles and responsibilities, as well as the conditions that are critical to building effective partnerships with all stakeholders. Some of the

partnerships will be global, others regional and yet others will be at the national and subnational levels, and involve citizens acting individually and in groups.

81. The role and responsibilities of stakeholders will vary. At the national and subnational levels, multi-stakeholder partnerships will be critical for implementation and service delivery. Such partnerships could be coordinated through national sustainable development strategies and around specific issues, such as employment, health care and energy, bringing together governmental bodies, civil society, the business sector and United Nations development agencies. Other roles include the provision of technical and scientific information and creating awareness as well as advocacy on issues of poverty eradication and sustainable development. They can also make invaluable contributions to dialogue and to the follow-up and review of all development endeavours at all levels.

82. Civil society has played a major role in the promotion and attainment of development, emphasizing different approaches. For example, civil society advocacy for civil rights, minority rights, social protection, gender equality, environmental protection and corporate responsibility has made significant contributions to the development of the concept of sustainable development and to the elaboration and implementation of sustainable development policies. Members of civil society create awareness and encourage individuals, communities, Governments and businesses to improve their disposition, performance and action. They are particularly important for advocating action on challenging or sensitive issues relating to human rights, poverty eradication, sustainable development, fairness and equality. They are also critically important in their representation of disadvantaged groups.

83. The business sector, including large companies and multinational enterprises operating in developing countries, should contribute to poverty eradication and sustainable development in the communities in which it operates and beyond. Firms can provide resources to support and implement initiatives, such as for education and health care. They can contribute economically through wages and taxes and can purchase local goods and services and provide technical and management assistance to suppliers in local enterprises.

84. Academic institutions, including educational and research institutions at all levels, are critical for providing research and scientific evidence for decision-making and action. They also play a vital role in educating the public on the principles and long-term benefits of sustainable development, on policies that have proven cost-effective in its promotion and on ways in which individuals and communities can contribute to the process.

85. Particular groups, such as indigenous peoples, should be consulted on projects that affect them and their ecosystem. Indigenous peoples generally have a special relationship to particular regions and ecosystems, and are often disproportionately poor. They are likely to be particularly affected by the unsustainable use and degradation of land, forest and water resources. Their special knowledge should be used in assessing the impacts of development activities and in developing policies to protect ecosystems and biodiversity and promote their well-being.

86. In the Millennium Development Goals era, civil society participated with the United Nations in multi-stakeholder partnerships, many of which were led by the Secretary-General, including the Every Woman, Every Child initiative, the

Sustainable Energy for All initiative, the Global Education First Initiative, the Zero Hunger Challenge initiative, the Scaling Up Nutrition movement and the Call to Action on Sanitation. Those initiatives are highly focused collections of voluntary partnerships involving Governments, multilateral and regional institutions, foundations, civil society organizations and for-profit enterprises, and serve to encourage multi-stakeholder collaboration on specific issues.

87. In the post-2015 era, innovative and entrepreneurial multi-stakeholder partnerships may evolve continuously as new issue-based or sector-based coalitions emerge to tackle new development challenges and offer new solutions. Stronger and more effective partnerships around issues, such as health, energy and water, or around groups, such as youth, women and indigenous peoples, among others, can be anticipated. In addition to advancing specific substantive objectives, they are also an integral part of the overall effort to respond to development challenges and provide solutions.

88. The continuing elaboration of the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda, including the means of implementation, has had an unprecedented level of participation of these stakeholders. It is also anticipated that they will play an important role in its follow-up and review.

B. Policy and coordination issues relating to multi-stakeholder partnerships

89. The increasingly important role and responsibilities of multi-stakeholder partners, which are voluntary in nature, is generally not yet mediated by any formal arrangements but by flexible and non-binding provisions in many conference and summit outcome documents and similar legislation. Differences of opinion remain about the exact role and impact of their engagement and on whether the expectations about their contributions will be fully met. There are policy and guidance issues as well as legitimacy and governance issues regarding partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement on which discussions must continue in order to better manage and tap into their full potential for the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals.

90. There are also concerns about the right balance in the assignment of roles and responsibilities to partners, while respecting the primary role of Governments. Those concerns will need to be discussed and addressed urgently, given that delivering on the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals will depend upon the active involvement of all partners and stakeholders.

91. For multi-stakeholders partnerships to assume and perform their anticipated roles and responsibilities, a minimum of factors will need to be in place, including:

(a) A fundamental change in mindset and attitudes recognizing the vital role of multi-stakeholder partnerships and the involvement of community-based constituencies in poverty eradication and sustainable development outcomes;

(b) A clear common vision and agenda to motivate coordinated and coherent action by all partners and stakeholders. It will be critical that the sustainable development goals and the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable

development become the shared vision and call to action that is accepted and understood in terms of its scope, ambition and impact;

(c) Clarity in the primary role and responsibility of Governments with regard to the roles and responsibilities of multi-stakeholder partners, with the aim of promoting synergy and complementarity and reconciling perceived conflicts of interest and purpose;

(d) Clarity about the comparative advantage and strengths of multi-stakeholder partners at all levels, taking into account that there will be power asymmetries, such as between business and civil society contributions, which should be harnessed for stronger and more effective results;

(e) The recognition that conflict-of-interest issues may still arise and that there is a need for dialogue to resolve them;

(f) Commitment to continuous learning, in recognition of the complexity of the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals and the intricacy of effective partnerships;

(g) A need, arising from all the above, to agree on ways and means to follow up on and review the contribution from multi-stakeholder partners, as well as to take into account their contributions in the overall follow-up and review of progress of the post-2015 development agenda.

92. The policy considerations above raise the question of where the coordination and coherence, as well as the learning and development, should take place in the policies and guidance necessary to maximize the impact of the contribution of multi-stakeholder partners. A new understanding and consensus needs to emerge on suitable arrangements for undertaking dialogue and developing policies and guidance on the roles and responsibilities of multi-stakeholder partners.

93. Currently, there is discussion and activity on these issues in many partnership forums and in some sectors, yet these remain voluntary and informal and are not necessarily linked to a common agenda or vision. These undertakings will need to conclude in time to contribute to the transition to the sustainable development goals and to support the effective implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

C. Partnerships for South-South and triangular development cooperation

94. The global cooperation landscape has undergone significant changes, and South-South cooperation has become increasingly important as many developing countries have become more economically powerful. South-South development partnerships in trade, foreign direct investment and technology flows and exchanges have increased considerably. Since 2008, for example, developing countries have exported more to one another than to developed countries.

95. International organizations, including United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, have been strengthening their support for South-South development partnerships and in many cases have formed triangular development partnerships involving developed countries. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, for example, has established a broad trust fund framework agreement with

China and works with African partners to scale up the impact of South-South cooperation on food security and nutrition.

96. Another example is the United Nations Environment Programme-China-Africa Cooperation on the Environment partnership, which provides technical support to African countries to scale up solutions that have proved successful in China, such as dryland agriculture and water treatment. Other examples include innovative and inclusive partnerships developed by the World Intellectual Property Organization to promote access to knowledge and technology in the context of South-South cooperation in the area of intellectual property.

97. The establishment of new institutions of South-South cooperation, such as the New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, present new opportunities to finance investments in sustainable development.

VI. Follow-up and review

98. The emerging post-2015 development agenda will be universal in its applicability and much broader than the Millennium Development Goals in its substantive scope, requiring a broader, participatory, multilayered follow-up and review of implementation. The international community has a unique opportunity to support a more streamlined review and follow-up process to advance and improve upon the implementation of the new development agenda.

99. At the 2005 World Summit, Heads of State and Government committed themselves to the timely and full realization of the Millennium Development Goals as well as the international development goals agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits. The Economic and Social Council was entrusted with a number of new tools to pursue integrated follow-up and review, including the annual ministerial review.

100. Important insight can be drawn from the annual ministerial reviews of the Economic and Social Council since 2007. By embracing a broad vision of development, the reviews have deepened the integration of development issues, fostered a unified approach and advanced thematic coherence. They have drawn on a combination of global and regional reviews, thematic assessments and national voluntary presentations to deliver on the United Nations development agenda. The reviews at the global, regional and national levels have enabled the international community to focus on cross-sectoral areas, capturing critical issues for action emphasized in the outcomes of conferences and summits. They have served to develop an integrated policy framework for action at the national, regional and international levels.

101. Through the annual ministerial reviews, the Economic and Social Council has given sustained political and substantive significance to the integrated follow-up of conferences. The reviews have served to offer a comprehensive process that provides a full picture of overall progress in implementing the United Nations development agenda and to provide the basis for the formulation of policies that effectively cover interlinkages between the development goals.

A. Multi-tiered follow-up and review of implementation

102. As the contours of the post-2015 development agenda have taken shape, discussions on follow-up and review are continuing within the context of the post-2015 negotiations. Exact arrangements for a future framework to support this will depend on the agreed agenda, including the financing and other means of implementation.

103. Discussions have emphasized the need for a voluntary, State-led, participatory, evidence-based and multi-tiered process to track progress. A universal review process constructed on those principles could be initiated at the national level and would inform the regional-level and global-level reviews. At all levels, follow-up and review discussions should be public, participatory, broadly accessible and based on data, scientific findings and evidence-based evaluations.

104. The universal agenda will require broad participation, which could be pursued through a multi-tiered review and follow-up of implementation at the national, regional and global levels. The follow-up would need to provide incentives to all actors to engage, take ownership of the agenda, mobilize action and stimulate mutual learning and constructive exchanges on how to make progress and necessary policy adjustments.

105. At the national level, global commitments will need to be translated into country-level commitments and actions, with specific targets to which all development partners can commit. To ensure inclusiveness and participation, the follow-up and review would need to be rooted in a decentralized, people-centred and bottom-up approach, driven by the national level, through which Governments are answerable to parliaments and people.

106. Parliaments, local governments and citizens have an integral role to play in promoting national follow-up and review and, by extension, implementation of the international development commitments. Follow-up and review of implementation would also need to connect national experiences to the regional and global levels. This would facilitate Member States and other actors to share insight and deliver on results in a unified and integrated manner.

107. Ultimately, the main focus of the follow-up and review would be to support the achievement of the development agenda at the country level. Many mechanisms already exist to review progress, and those mechanisms and efforts could be adapted to fit the new requirements of the post-2015 development agenda. This would require feedback from country efforts to the regional and global levels, and vice versa.

108. At the regional level, a multi-tiered follow-up and review should take into consideration the roles and mandates of regional institutions and entities. The United Nations regional commissions recently convened regional consultations on an accountability framework for post-2015. The consultations underscored that regional platforms could provide space for sharing national experiences on the implementation of the agenda.

109. The regional dimension could play a critical role because countries within regions share common experiences and challenges. A regional review and follow-up could be supportive of countries' efforts to deliver on development commitments.

The regional dimension could facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences and support coherent policies and approaches.

110. The regional level is also the natural platform for tackling regional challenges in sustainable development. The regional follow-up and review could help countries to translate global goals into policies, guidelines, recommendations and standards that could be implemented at the national level, as well as mobilize partnerships and South-South cooperation.

111. At the global level, follow-up and review will need to offer a comprehensive view of the state of implementation of the wide range of commitments for the post-2015 development agenda. The global framework would need to bring together elements from all levels and sectors regarding progress on specific goals, including on financing and the means of implementation, as well as encourage implementation and promote the sharing of lessons, data and information.

112. The post-2015 development agenda offers a unique opportunity to establish a coherent global follow-up and review framework that engages all stakeholders. To ensure coherence, interlinkages will need to be established. The framework would also need to support an integrated approach to poverty eradication and sustainable development, in its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

113. At all levels, effective use could be made of the existing mechanisms operated by organizations. Such mechanisms, especially at the regional level, may be best placed for drawing lessons from national implementation and bring together findings on progress on specific goals and targets. Existing multi-tiered follow-up and review mechanisms at all levels could be used. Mechanisms would need to be broad, flexible and built on the national level as the primary focus of both action and drawing lessons and insight.

114. To support follow-up and review, collecting good and reliable information and data will be important. Reviews rely on robust and high-quality data, which should be made available publicly, along with broad and inclusive information. There is a need to ensure that data are timely, reliable and sufficiently disaggregated. Good coverage and quality of data are essential. Disaggregated data at the national, regional and global levels and in terms of poverty characteristics will be critical for formulating effective and well-targeted policy responses. Technology could be used to make data more accessible.

115. Improvements in data quality and collection could provide information and evidence for the follow-up and review of implementation post-2015. There may be a need for increased transparency and open access to public data. Co-creation of data by various stakeholders could complement the official data collection and statistics. These priorities have already been reflected in the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development.[3]

[3] "A world that counts: mobilizing the data revolution for sustainable development", November 2014. Available from www.undatarevolution.org/report/.

B. Role of the United Nations

116. The United Nations has a critical role in supporting a unified follow-up and review at all levels. The review of the implementation of conference outcomes involves the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council system, including its functional, regional and expert bodies. As the highest intergovernmental policymaking organ of the United Nations, the Assembly will continue to fulfil a crucial role in providing high-level policy guidance that can serve to strengthen and sustain commitments towards the implementation of the individual conference outcomes and the post-2015 development agenda.

117. The Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which is under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Council, will support the formulation of global integrated policymaking for the post-2015 development agenda.

118. The Economic and Social Council has a key role in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development at the global level. Its annual main theme provides the focus for the integration of analysis within the Council system, which supports intergovernmental integrated policy formulation. Every part of the Council system aligns, to the extent possible, its work to the main theme, and the analysis and policy recommendations inform the deliberations on the outcome of the high-level segment of the Council. Thus the Council serves as a unifying platform to consolidate the contributions and analysis of the Council system, as well as the United Nations development system, into integrated policy guidance.

119. The high-level political forum on sustainable development is designed to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, follow-up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, and enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels. In the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", Heads of State mandated that the high-level political forum on sustainable development should conduct regular reviews of follow-up and progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation, within the context of the post-2015 development agenda. Those reviews, which will begin after the post-2015 development agenda has been adopted and replace the Economic and Social Council national voluntary presentations, will include developed and developing countries and the United Nations system entities.

120. The high-level political forum on sustainable development, when meeting under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, has a thematic focus reflecting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, in line with the thematic focus of the activities of the Council and consistent with the post-2015 development agenda. It also takes into account the work of the Development Cooperation Forum, as well as other activities of the Council relating to the integration and implementation of sustainable development. The high-level forum meets every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government, under the auspices of the General Assembly, and annually under the auspices of the Council for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment.

121. The Economic and Social Council integration segment has been tasked with promoting the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the United Nations system and beyond. The segment serves as a platform for consolidating the input of Member States, the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders; promoting the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development by engaging policymakers from ministries; and bringing together the key messages from the Council system on the annual main theme of the Council and developing action-oriented recommendations for follow-up.

122. The integration segment addresses the interplay of the three dimensions of sustainable development as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender, science and technology, and trade and finance, especially in relation to policy options and their implications. The work of the segment can thus facilitate policy integration and the transmission and incorporation of policy guidance.

123. The Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council serves as a key forum for the review of trends in international development cooperation. With its engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, the Forum could review the development cooperation aspects of a revitalized global partnership for development and successor arrangements for Millennium Development Goal 8. It can also continue to review national mutual accountability and transparency in development cooperation and promote policy coherence.

124. The Economic and Social Council system is an interlocking framework that connects functional and regional commissions, expert bodies and specialized agencies. All have clear distinctive yet interlinked roles and together will support the setting of new norms and standards applicable to all countries and the overall follow-up and review of implementation. The Council system could provide policy recommendations for the implementation by all countries of all sustainable development goals and targets.

125. The transition to the post-2015 development agenda will also demand adaptation and change for follow-up and review from the United Nations development system as a whole. The integration requirements of the post-2015 development agenda will also demand the United Nations development system to develop capacity to shift seamlessly between specialization and integration.

126. For the United Nations development system to be fit for supporting implementation, follow-up and review at the country level, there is a need for expertise, flexibility and agility in responding to the changing development context. This will require a significant strengthening of coordination capacity at both the inter-agency and intergovernmental levels.

127. Through the Economic and Social Council dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system, Member States have a platform to forge a common vision for the repositioning of the United Nations development system and renewing capacity for follow-up and review of implementation. The Secretary-General is expected to reflect the outcome of the Council dialogue in his report for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly of operational activities of the United Nations system, to be held in late 2016.

VII. Policy recommendations

128. The following policy recommendations for enhancing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the realization of the sustainable development goals and the broader post-2015 development agenda are submitted to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration.

Pursuing policy integration for a unified development agenda

129. Countries will need to review their various development strategies, policies and plans in order to ensure that they are adequately aligned with the post-2015 development agenda, when adopted.

130. The broadening of the post-2015 development agenda demands integrated policy responses to complex development challenges at the country and global levels and the growing systemic risks associated with the accelerating globalization and interconnectedness of countries. In response, countries need to deepen policy integration and cooperation at all levels.

131. Supportive institutions at all levels need to enable diverse actors to effectively align their efforts with the objectives of the post-2015 development agenda and the global partnership for sustainable development that will underpin it.

132. Greater awareness and understanding of the post-2015 agenda and the integrated approach that it requires needs to be achieved at all levels, through strong scientific analysis and a widespread and multisectoral communication effort.

133. Regional organizations, with the support of regional entities of the United Nations, should support the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the tracking of progress.

134. The Economic and Social Council system should promote policy integration and coherence in response to the need to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

135. The United Nations development system needs to support countries' efforts to formulate and implement integrated policies through a broad range of forms of cooperation, with a strong focus on partnerships.

136. The United Nations system should be prepared to assist, at the request of Member States, in the assessment of existing mechanisms at the national level, such as national plans and reports, and their fitness for purpose for national planning and measuring the progress of sustainable development goals, and recommend principles and elements for a common approach to tailoring the global agenda to national circumstances.

137. Integration requirements of the post-2015 development agenda call for working methods at the national, regional and global levels that enable the United Nations system to allocate resources and share the knowledge of entities in an efficient manner and adjust programmes to focus on joint results achieved by a United Nations development system that is enabled to deliver results together.

138. The diversity of development needs and the implication of universality requires broad engagement by the United Nations system that responds to specific national contexts.

Institutional requirements for the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals

139. There is an urgent need to build trust among Governments, institutions and people by strengthening institutions at all levels so as to provide an enabling environment for building inclusive and peaceful societies.

140. Institutional arrangements should be dynamic and adapt to change whenever necessary in order to keep up with the new and emerging challenges of development as well as new approaches to tackling them. These arrangements should be country-specific and time-specific, and suit local circumstances.

141. At the national level, institutional reforms must lead to outcomes that leave no one behind, are accessible to all and address the needs of the population. This may require designating or instituting new national bodies to strategize, plan, follow-up and review implementation. To address low capacity, in particular in terms of the human, technological and financial resources required to strengthen or create institutions and systems, the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals will require translating global aspirations and vision into practical and adequately resourced national and subnational priorities and programmes.

142. A continued multilateral process, centred around the United Nations, of maintaining policy coherence, identifying new and emerging priorities, and following up on and reviewing progress is critical for delivering on an ambitious post-2015 development agenda.

Revitalized global partnership for sustainable development

143. The revitalized global partnership for sustainable development should be built on strong political will and action, and involve national and international, as well as public and private, constituencies as core elements of a transformational approach.

144. To further define, clarify and enhance the roles and responsibilities that multi-stakeholder partnerships should fulfil and the contributions that they should make in the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals:

(a) More analysis needs to be undertaken to understand and clarify the roles and responsibilities of multi-stakeholder partnerships at the national, regional and global levels;

(b) A review may be undertaken within existing resources of the existing mechanisms for coordinating the multi-stakeholder partners, with a view to drawing relevant lessons;

(c) There is a need for an agreed framework for the promotion, follow-up and review of the contribution of multi-stakeholder partnerships;

(d) The dialogue on multi-stakeholder partnerships should continue to be pursued in the Economic and Social Council, as well as in the high-level political forum on sustainable development under its auspices, among other existing partnership forums.

145. The contributions of South-South and triangular cooperation, including regional and subregional organizations, should be developed further in the transition

from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals, including through the support of the United Nations and other international organizations, while recognizing that it is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, the broader global partnership for sustainable development.

Follow-up and review

146. As Member States are deliberating upon a follow-up and review mechanism, the United Nations development system needs to ensure that it provides the data, information and analysis necessary to enable Member States to reach informed conclusions, recommendations and decisions.

United Nations E/2015/69

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
24 April 2015

Original: English

2015 session
21 July 2014-22 July 2015
Agenda item 5 (d)
High-level segment: thematic discussion

Strengthening and building institutions for policy integration in the post-2015 era

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 61/16, the General Assembly requested the Economic and Social Council to hold during its substantive session a thematic discussion to promote global dialogue on a theme from economic, social and related fields to be decided by the Council and informed by a report of the Secretary-General. In its decision 2015/206, the Council decided that the discussion in 2015 should focus on the theme "Strengthening and building institutions for policy integration in the post-2015 era".

Institutions are essential enablers of development, given that they provide and maintain the "rules of the game" that shape and regulate human action. The role of institutions will be fundamental in adopting the more integrated approaches to policymaking that are necessary for the implementation of the post-2015 development vision. This role poses significant analytical, operational and political challenges that will require institutions to be able to work across policy domains and organizational boundaries and to access data from multiple sources; institutional coherence and coordination at all levels of policymaking will be required to ensure policy coherence across sectors, governance levels, systems and generations. Governance structures for sustainable development would need to be more flexible, horizontal, inclusive and adaptable to remain relevant. Institutional innovation will be essential. With regard to the role of Governments, ownership, transformational leadership, communication, both within Governments and between public and private institutions, and capacity-building will be pivotal.

15-06436 (E) 200515

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. Good and effective institutions have been recognized as critical enablers and outcomes of development. They are not only essential to translating development objectives into policies and practices, coordinating activities and mobilizing people and resources for their realization, but are also the very embodiment of society's development vision and values.

2. Achieving the transformative vision of the post-2015 development agenda will require removing social, political, economic and environmental constraints to allow a more integrated approach to development. This will involve an aggregated and coherent set of actions at all levels of governance by the full range of stakeholders: Governments, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and civil society. Such enabling environments will be needed at all levels to ensure that the transformation that is necessary to support implementation of the sustainable development goals and the attainment of sustainable development takes place.

3. Institutions will be essential to this transformation. The first step will be to define the nature and characteristics of appropriate institutions that, by promoting policy integration and coherence across diverse sectors, governance levels and systems, can act as both enablers and outcomes of such a transformation.

4. The present report represents a conceptual discussion of institutions and institutional arrangements that could best support integrated policymaking to tackle the goals and challenges of the post-2015 period. In this context, policy integration entails intersectoral interaction that leads to a single joint policy for the sectors involved, and policy coherence aims at adjusting sectoral policies to make them mutually enforcing and consistent.[1] The discussion will explore, on the basis of existing experiences and studies, the institutional requirements and capabilities needed to adapt to the aspirations and challenges of the new agenda as well as the type of institutional changes that will be called for.

5. The present report should be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General on the theme for the 2015 session of the Economic and Social Council, "Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: what it will take" (E/2015/68).

II. Institutional requirements for sustainable development

6. The post-2015 development agenda will be based on two overarching objectives — poverty eradication and sustainable development — covering a wide range of goals and targets. Such an ambitious agenda will require strong institutions to generate the necessary synergies across a broad range of policy areas and ensure coordinated and mutually reinforcing policies. Institutional coherence and coordination at all levels will help to ensure more integrated policy frameworks. A thorough analysis and review of existing institutional structures and the way that they work will therefore be essential to ascertain that they are fit for purpose.

[1] See Evert Meijers and Dominic Stead, "Policy integration: what does it mean and how can it be achieved? A multi-disciplinary review", paper prepared for the Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change on the theme "Greening of policies: interlinkages and policy integration", Berlin, December 2004.

7. A wide range of research provides compelling arguments for the critical importance of institutions in supporting countries' development trajectories.[2] Economic, political, social and related institutions, and good governance, were critical to progress on the Millennium Development Goals and will arguably play an even bigger role in the post-2015 development agenda.

8. The 17 goals and 169 targets proposed by the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals (see A/68/970 and Corr.1) has increased the number of potential synergies, interlinkages and trade-offs that will need to be taken into consideration in policymaking and implementation. For example, it has been observed that progress on ending poverty (sustainable development goal 1) cannot be achieved without progress on the food security target under sustainable development goal 2, macroeconomic policies relating to targets on full and productive employment and decent work under goal 8 and the reduction of inequality under goal 10, and without enhancing resilience to climate change under goal 13. Success in these and other areas will lead to better health and well-being, thus contributing to the achievement of goal 3.[3] Understanding this network of interdependencies and their implications for institutional arrangements will be essential to effective policy integration in the post-2015 context.

9. Policy integration for a successful transition to the post-2015 development agenda will occur only if institutional barriers to integrated policymaking are reduced, transparency enhanced and synergies across sectoral policy objectives increased. This will strengthen cooperation between institutions, specialists and other stakeholders working across the broad range of sectors and policy areas covered by the agenda. Integration is a challenge because of such factors as conflicting mandates and priorities among policymakers in different sectors and at different governmental levels. In addition, many institutions, especially public institutions at all levels, were designed in different contexts and have struggled to keep pace with fast-moving global changes.

10. Nevertheless, policy integration, whether between governance levels (national, regional or local, i.e., vertical integration) or between units, departments or ministries at any governmental level (i.e., horizontal integration), is an essential precondition for achieving more sustainable development.

11. A concerted national effort to assess current institutional capacity at the national level will be the principal driver of success in the post-2015 context because the results will enable countries to develop precise frameworks for improving policy coherence for sustainable development across policies. This assessment should be complemented by a similar review of institutional arrangements at the regional and global levels to ensure that national efforts to strengthen institutions for policy integration are supported by the international community coherently. That will not be an easy task at any level, given that most institutions, including those that do coordinate to some degree, focus primarily on

[2] Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (London, Profile Books, 2012) and Timothy Besley and Torsten Persson, *Pillars of Prosperity: The Political Economics of Development Clusters* (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2011).

[3] International Council for Science and International Social Science Council, *Review of Targets for the Sustainable Development Goals: The Science Perspective* (Paris, International Council for Science, 2015).

sector-specific priorities and objectives set by their often different constituencies and might be resistant to improving horizontal or vertical policy coherence and unwilling to accept certain trade-offs.[4] Strong political leadership, capacity-building and mechanisms for broad-based participation, accountability and policy effectiveness will be critical requirements for the necessary institutional strengthening to take place.

Taking an integrated approach to policy formulation

12. To avoid conflicts and contradictions between policies, an integrated approach to policymaking for sustainable development needs to be adopted that focuses on the interlinkages between policy areas and objectives. For the purpose of the present report, integrated approaches to policy formulation, or policy integration, denotes the "management of cross-cutting issues in policymaking that transcend the boundaries of established policy fields, which often do not correspond to the institutional responsibilities of individual departments".[5] Such an approach will need an institutional framework and structures that will enable it. Institutions will need to be able to pursue multiple but well-articulated and agreed objectives, taking into consideration how efforts to attain one goal can have an impact on efforts towards the achievement of another.[6]

13. Institutions will need to work "horizontally", i.e., across ministries and other policymaking and implementation bodies, to capitalize on potential efficiencies and synergies between goals and to avoid fragmentation. One lesson learned from the experience of the Millennium Development Goals was that having separate goals that were related but not clearly integrated with one another, such as Goals 4, 5 and 6, encouraged institutions to organize their planning, financing, procurement, delivery, monitoring and reporting vertically in relation to each Goal, rather than to look holistically at health systems and policies that could strengthen sustainable health systems and progress across the three Goals (and on other critical health challenges not included in the Goals framework).[7]

14. The Secretary-General has noted that most consultations on and input for the post-2015 preparations have underscored the need to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development across the new agenda. Several key elements have been suggested to encourage integration, including norm-based policy coherence at all levels, corresponding reform of global governance mechanisms and a renewed, effective global partnership for sustainable development. These elements would ideally be based on shared principles such as solidarity, cooperation, mutual accountability and the participation of Governments and all stakeholders (see A/69/700).

---

[4] Matt Andrews, *The Limits of Institutional Reform in Development: Changing Rules for Realistic Solutions* (Cambridge, United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[5] Meijers and Stead, "Policy integration: what does it mean and how can it be achieved?", p. 1.

[6] Alex Volkery and others, "Coordination, challenges and innovations in 19 national development strategies", *World Development*, vol. 34, No. 12 (2006).

[7] Jeff Waage and others, "The Millennium Development Goals: a cross-sectoral analysis and principles for goal setting after 2015", *Lancet*, vol. 376, No. 9745 (2010) (citing the Taskforce on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems, "Constraints to scaling up and costs: Working Group 1 report" (Geneva, World Health Organization, 2009)).

15. Most policies, including, for example, those on sustained, inclusive growth, job creation and social protection, have implications for one or more of the three dimensions of sustainable development; however, such policies will generally have implications for, or linkages with, other dimensions and sectors as well. It will be essential to take account of their direct and indirect impact to facilitate the formulation of policies that will enhance synergies across all dimensions. In some cases, policies can be elaborated as integrated packages that together promote economic development, social equity and environmental protection.

16. One of the strengths of the sustainable development approach lies in the importance that it places on looking not just at symptoms of development challenges but also at their underlying causes; this, in turn, can enable a more integrated approach to addressing them. For example, the multiplier effects of clean water infrastructure or sustainable energy provision have economic, social and environmental benefits. Policy decisions that are made in one sector can have significant impacts on others and tensions may arise from real or perceived trade-offs between various objectives. Careful assessment would therefore be required to reconcile competing policy objectives, build policy coherence and strengthen existing coordination mechanisms. A critical challenge will be to identify policy trade-offs and contradictions between policy areas (and levels), for example, between growth and environmental sustainability, between trade and employment, and between energy, water and food. Appropriate solutions will depend on the national context and priorities.

17. The challenge facing countries is how to revise their national development strategies, including sectoral strategies, macroeconomic policies and social protection and labour market policies, to ensure that they are mutually reinforcing. To that end, it is important to identify interlinkages — or policy nexuses — where converging issues can be tackled together to develop a cohesive and integrated plan, for example, addressing the impact of climate change on multiple sectors (agriculture, water, energy, production and the labour market). Discussion of such nexuses can define the types of institutions that will be needed to manage potential trade-offs and promote mutually beneficial policies.

Effective and inclusive service delivery

18. In the post-2015 development framework, leaving no one behind will require institutions to work more effectively and inclusively in providing services. Consultations on the new development agenda have highlighted the urgent need to deal with the deficit in trust between people, institutions and Governments. Inclusiveness and equity will need to be embedded into institutions, in particular at the national level, to deliver commitments to pursue progress on behalf of all people, with particular attention to groups that have traditionally been excluded.

19. Given the inclusiveness of the consultation process on the post-2015 development agenda (more than 7 million people have taken the MyWorld survey),[8] much attention is being given to the capacity of institutions to ensure inclusion and participation. There is a need to build capacity to be inclusive in policy development and in service delivery, as well as in promoting civic engagement. Building the

[8] See https://myworld2015.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/wethepeoples-7million.pdf.

capacity to set in place and manage inclusive processes for policy development and service delivery will be critical in this regard.

20. Capacity to carry out core government functions, such as justice and security, and ensuring that services are delivered inclusively is especially important in fragile States in which building resilience and restoring confidence between the authorities and communities is a crucial element of peacebuilding.[9] Successful approaches in such States should be rooted in the national context, building on community-based mechanisms to harmonize traditional and modern institutions and develop a shared vision and a clear mission for public institutions that promote peace and sustainable development.[10] Building accountability and participation from the bottom up will help to build trust and ensure that people can influence decision-making.

21. Flexibility and innovation should drive the design of inclusive and effective institutional strategies for effective service delivery. Information and communications technology, especially e-government functions, have often played an integral role in overall institutional strengthening and improvement of service delivery capacity.[10] They can indeed facilitate information exchange and feedback processes to improve institutional effectiveness and fill gaps in delivery for specific service users. They can also facilitate communication between Governments, public institutions, citizens and other stakeholders to increase awareness of the nature and requirements of the sustainable development goals. This will be especially important in managing the transition to the post-2015 development agenda.

Institutional requirements at the national and subnational levels

22. Assessing institutional structures at the national level is necessary to understand the processes and constraints that influence implementation of development objectives. National-level governance systems and institutions generally influence how public policies are designed and implemented; their capacities determine the extent to which such policies will be effective.

23. Several mechanisms to promote horizontal cooperation among national institutions can be conducive to integrated policymaking. First, establishing such organizational arrangements as interdepartmental committees, commissions and working and/or steering groups that convoke various departments and ministries can help to overcome barriers resulting from different technical perspectives and promote cooperation between experts from different sectors. This is sometimes referred to as the "whole of Government" approach, in which government departments and agencies combine their skills and knowledge to work together on policy implementation, programme management and service delivery. The effectiveness and legitimacy of the mechanisms depend on their being supported with sufficient resources, capacities and political mandates.

24. Second, direction by a central body can help in coordinating the outcomes of such institutional arrangements and supporting the coordination of policies of ministries or departments. "Centres of Government" (i.e., offices of heads of Government or prime ministers) have been highlighted as the key convenors best

[9] Derick W. Brinkerhoff, ed., *Governance in Post-Conflict Societies: Rebuilding Fragile States* (Abingdon, Oxon, Routledge, 2007).

[10] *World Public Sector Report 2010: Reconstructing Public Administration after Conflict: Challenges, Practices and Lessons Learned* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.II.H.1).

placed to provide leadership at the highest levels, join together policy interests, raise awareness around synergies and trade-offs and push for consensus. The importance of their role became especially clear during the most recent global economic and financial crisis when Governments were responsible for delivering "joined up" stabilization and recovery plans cutting across national financial, economic and social sectors.[11]

25. Third, intersectoral strategies, programmes and policies, which require cooperation between departments or ministries in terms of both design and implementation, should embed collaboration into the organizational culture of their respective administrative bodies and procedures. This can be done, for example, by designing objectives that cut across sectoral divisions, as will be required by the post-2015 development agenda, accompanied by clear incentives to collaborate on intersectoral initiatives.

26. New institutional structures have recently been created or reconfigured to take sustainable development into account. Many countries have established national sustainable development-related commissions, departments, focal institutions or programmes to determine national sustainable development priorities, advise public institutions, monitor progress against objectives and promote public knowledge of and support for the three dimensions of sustainable development. Many countries have been taking an "integrating approach" and ensuring a bottom-up path to sustainable development through the establishment of sustainable development councils, the members of which usually include leading figures from government-affiliated institutions, science, business and other cultural and social entities. Those bodies have been said to be generally effective in promoting the sustainable development concept, but their impact on policymaking is varied and dependent on the extent to which Governments have embedded genuine decision-making authority into their structures.

27. Subnational and municipal governments also have an important role to play in overcoming silos and taking an integrating approach to policy. Many municipalities provide the services that support economic activities, social integration and environmental protection, in part because social and environmental problems as well as economic opportunities and innovation tend to be concentrated in cities. Because of their smaller size, potential for nimble responsiveness, limited geographic scale and shorter distance between policymakers and constituents, cities have become some of the leading practitioners of policy integration for sustainable development, having developed many good practices worthy of consideration by national, regional and international institutions. City and local governments have also proven to be good sources of locally derived and issue-oriented strategies, policies and solutions that take an integrated approach, demonstrating the importance of a best-fit concept of institutional arrangements for policy integration rather than one size fits all.

Institutional requirements at the regional level

28. The increasing interdependence of and economic, financial and environmental interconnectedness between countries highlights the potential risks posed by

[11] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "Policy coherence for inclusive and sustainable development", OECD and Post-2015 Reflections, Element 8, Paper 1 (Paris, (n.d.)).

negative spillovers of policies and processes from one country to another, especially in those countries linked by regional integration. It also underlines the opportunities for and importance of more regional (and global) approaches to taking on current and emerging challenges to generating economies of scale within regions that would both promote greater opportunities for countries in the region and minimize potential policy trade-offs.

29. Institutional frameworks seeking to strengthen regional ties and collaboration are also crucial in the current context, especially for developing countries, given the state of policy space in the international financial system. For example, regional financial and monetary cooperation can help to enlarge the policy headroom in which developing countries can apply pro-growth macroeconomic policies by providing facilities for short-term (balance of payments) and long-term (investment) financing and for currency or payment systems to facilitate intraregional trade and service provision. Intraregional collaboration with regard to large-scale or multipartner infrastructure networks can also make an important contribution.

30. Regional policy coherence, coordination and partnership are especially important for the expansion of trade opportunities, markets and investments, as well as for the promotion and sharing of knowledge and innovation, and can increase national and regional competitiveness and nurture national capacity to promote sustained and inclusive growth, poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. Studies have shown how regional integration can be a powerful instrument for fostering structural transformation and promoting inclusive growth. It can promote infrastructure development and shared transport networks (e.g., transport corridors), which are crucial for many countries, especially countries in such special situations as landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, if they are to participate in the global economy and join global value chains. Enhanced regional coordination is also crucial for addressing transboundary development concerns, especially of an environmental or social nature.

31. Recent initiatives that target countries in special situations in particular, such as the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024, have institutional implications and requirements that need to be aligned with the post-2015 development framework.

Institutional requirements at the global level

32. In the face of an increasingly globalized and interconnected economy and society, national efforts will not be sufficient to remove systemic obstacles to the implementation of the sustainable development goals, especially in the poorest countries and in areas that are governed by agreements, rules and institutions at the global level. While regional integration efforts can contribute greatly to many areas such as trade, investment and transport, broader achievement of the post-2015 development agenda will be possible only if there is an enabling global environment based on greater policy coherence and cooperation.

33. International cooperation can play a critical role in helping to identify a mix of macro-level and sector-specific productive development policies that are geared towards developing productive capacities, expanding employment and increasing labour productivity as well as increasing national wealth and raising living standards. In addition, international cooperation can help countries to promote

monetary, fiscal and structural factors that reinforce one another nationally and that are supported by coherent action and regimes at the global level. At the same time, national Governments will retain the prerogative in decision-making and policymaking that reflect their individual challenges, needs, circumstances and priorities. While some policy constraints at the national level may help to ensure a better functioning, efficient global economy, the reduction of the policy space of developing countries can undermine their efforts to achieve the twin objectives of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

34. Greater coherence between policies at the global and national levels could help to take on and resolve such broad systemic challenges as debt restructuring, access to markets and sustainable international financial flows in ways that would benefit all countries and all societal groups, allowing economic transformation to take place.

35. For countries in special situations, such as the least developed countries, this would require breaking the vicious circle of underdevelopment that keeps countries from making progress. The least developed countries remain vulnerable to systemic risks and continue to be marginalized in the world economy. The "rules of the game" for international development cooperation and global institutions would need to be challenged in order to address the structural weaknesses typical of those countries. A more supportive international development architecture for the least developed countries would involve addressing imbalances, bottlenecks and opportunities in the areas of finance, trade, investment, commodities, technology and climate change. Continued and innovative international support mechanisms and enhanced South-South cooperation would also be essential.

36. The challenge for the middle-income countries is to deepen their industrialization process through a transition to higher value-added activities and strengthen systems of social protection. A more supportive global environment should promote inclusion in the formulation of global policies and regimes that boost resilience in all countries and generate conditions for stronger and sustained growth and inclusive development.

Implications for development cooperation in the post-2015 development agenda

37. The post-2015 development agenda represents a paradigm shift in international development towards a universal, integrated and transformative approach to sustainable development on the basis of a renewed global partnership. This will have institutional, financial and policy implications for all actors, including development cooperation partners. The scope of the policy coherence agenda has expanded and concerns all countries regardless of their development level. Furthermore, the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals stated clearly, in its recommendations concerning goal 17, that policy and institutional coherence should be an integral part of the means of implementation of the post-2015 framework (see A/68/970 and Corr.1).

38. Lessons from the Millennium Development Goals experience highlight the need for a holistic approach to ensure the implementation of the goals, especially where efforts can be multiplied by looking across policy silos in pursuit of effective development cooperation. This will become even more important in the post-2015 agenda, where the scale — and range — of capacities, knowledge-sharing and resources needed for its implementation will be much greater than was required for

the Millennium Development Goals. In this context, official development assistance will remain an important instrument for progress and will require an increased focus on areas and populations where poverty is most prevalent as well as in sectors that are unlikely to attract other sources of investment or cooperation.

39. Development cooperation has begun increasingly to include mechanisms and actions to enhance policy coherence for development in all sectors that can have an impact on sustainable development and poverty eradication and a wide range of activities that do not explicitly fall within the mandates of traditional development cooperation actors, such as international trade or climate negotiations. The widening group of actors, who operate with different modalities and according to different sets of principles and objectives, being drawn into development cooperation also brings new opportunities as well as challenges in terms of institutional coordination. Institutional capacity-building to manage all sources of development financing and all forms of development cooperation effectively will become more important in the post-2015 context. Sharing of knowledge and national experiences and expertise in managing the development process will be critical in this regard.

40. Among development cooperation actors, transfers, whether of funds or knowledge, are seen as less important compared with the impacts of policy changes at the national and international levels that could have positive knock-on effects for developing countries. At the national level, such changes might include a review of the effects of public policies on various aspects of the post-2015 development agenda. The Center for Global Development has designed a commitment to development index[12] to assess which wealthy nations are helping poor ones the most. The index measures annually the efforts of 27 OECD countries in seven policy dimensions, including aid, trade and migration, combining the results to determine the "development-friendliness" of each country.

III. Institutional coherence at the regional and global levels

41. In an interconnected world, achieving sustained progress in creating jobs, reducing poverty and inequality, establishing sustainable patterns of consumption and production and managing climate change will require rebalancing the relations between markets, States, societies and users of natural resources. Greater consistency in addressing the economic, social and environmental agendas will be needed so that policies and regulations in one area do not hamper progress or negatively affect outcomes in the others. More collective action will be needed to remove systemic obstacles to the more balanced approach that is beyond the reach of individual nations, and global and regional institutions will consequently have a bigger role to play.

42. However, global governance systems have not kept pace with worldwide trends in accelerating economic globalization, trade and capital flows, urbanization, migration, environmental degradation and climate change. As described earlier, multilateral regimes, institutions and policies governing the various dimensions of sustainable development are generally not equipped to manage and capitalize on the growing interdependence between and within policy areas or to reduce current contradictions. Consequently, some areas of common interest, such as migration and

[12] See www.cgdev.org/initiative/commitment-development-index/index.

commodity markets, are sparsely, or not at all, covered by global governance mechanisms while others, such as trade and the environment,[13] are overregulated by myriad arrangements with different rules and provisions, causing fragmentation, increased costs and reduced efficiency.[14]

43. The new development agenda needs regional and global governance structures that can fill existing institutional gaps and better visualize and explore the linkages across the proposed sustainable development goals. This would include setting targets and timelines that can best fit regional and global priorities and providing mechanisms to foster policy coherence across the dimensions of the sustainable development goals and that are rooted in substantive, inclusive dialogues among all stakeholder groups.

Preparedness at the global level

44. Multilateral institutions, including those that are part of the United Nations system, have made some progress in bridging the gaps by integrating some dimensions of sustainable development into their development frameworks, disseminating information on policy instruments as well as applying them in their programmatic work. The World Bank, for example, has integrated poverty reduction and environmental protection into its assistance to developing countries. It has also become a major advocate of poverty reduction, defining poverty standards and regularly assessing global, regional and national poverty levels and trends. The United Nations Environment Programme has advocated environmental impact assessments and other policy instruments for integrating environmental protection into development policy. At the intergovernmental level, the Economic and Social Council and its former Commission on Sustainable Development have promoted the concept of sustainable development and policy integration and various United Nations conferences have provided global forums for exchanging views on the issue.

45. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has taken the lead in bridging the gap between development and trade by providing a forum and specific mechanisms, for example, the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries, to generate synergies in the areas of trade, inclusive growth and environmental sustainability. In the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008, the Group of 20 has strengthened financial regulation and supervision, improving financial integrity and infrastructure. The limited composition of the Group and the lack of appropriate monitoring and accountability mechanisms, however, have constrained the regulatory capacity of that forum. More recently, the New Development Bank operated by Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank were established to fill institutional gaps in development cooperation and financing of South-South development cooperation.

46. Many multilateral institutions, however, often work in semi-isolation from one another, failing to promote a comprehensive approach to sustainable development.

---

[13] United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda, "Global governance and governance of the global commons in the global partnership for development beyond 2015" (January 2013).

[14] *Global Governance and Global Rules for Development in the Post-2015 Era* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.14.II.A.1).

Managing economic, social and environmental regimes in ways that are mutually reinforcing, where trade-offs can be resolved to balance the needs of current and future generations effectively, remains a key challenge that is further compounded by fragmentation within Governments.

47. Institutional gaps and incoherence in existing mechanisms, especially among institutions with a macroeconomic or an environmental focus, will need to be bridged if they are to develop actionable tools and policy advice for sustainable development. Considerations of environmental sustainability, in particular, will need to be mainstreamed more systematically across all institutions.

48. The new global architecture for sustainable development, which includes the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the United Nations Environment Assembly, is intended to promote greater policy coherence and integration among the three policy dimensions of sustainable development through dialogue and sharing of experiences as well as to provide a mechanism to monitor progress and offer policy guidance to support implementation. For this institutional framework to be effective, it will need to fill the regulatory and implementation deficit that has thus far characterized governance in the area of sustainable development. Innovative approaches to decision-making will need to be considered that explore and expand on the interlinkages with other international institutions and processes that might affect sustainable development outcomes. This could be supported by a strong monitoring and review framework that builds on existing mechanisms and reporting processes and is highly participatory, broadly accessible and based on solid evidence.

49. Greater coherence among current United Nations processes, in particular those concerning the post-2015 development agenda, the third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and between those processes and recurrent United Nations processes relating to sustainable development, including those in the areas of the oceans, biodiversity, health, food and agriculture, education, tourism and broadband connectivity, will also facilitate institutional preparedness for the post-2015 development agenda.

Preparedness at the regional level

50. Regional institutions contribute to connecting national and regional practices and global rules in a flexible and decentralized manner. They can complement multilateral regimes and treaties by providing regional standards and accountability frameworks. They can also help to provide a stronger regional voice in intergovernmental negotiations and thus broaden regional and national policy space in managing the post-2015 development agenda.

51. A plethora of institutions exist to promote regional cooperation in taking on common development challenges and in formulating more effective and comprehensive responses. Such institutions provide a platform for policy dialogue and for sharing knowledge, expertise and lessons learned in managing aspects of the development process. In some cases, they have also generated a common vision and model for prosperity in each region.

52. The African Union, for example, has expanded from a forum for policy dialogue into an institution that sets norms on matters of governance, development and regional integration. A strong governance structure, consisting of the African Union Commission, the Pan-African Parliament and the African Peer Review Mechanism, supports the work of the African Union, providing platforms for broad-based participation and accountability. The African Union has been able to articulate a new common vision and agenda for Africa in 2063 and an African common position on the post-2015 development agenda.

53. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, established in 2010 as a mechanism of political partnership, has emerged as a platform for regional integration. It has made important strides in promoting successful financial policies, advancing regional economic integration and coordination around foreign policy and conflict resolution. In this regard, it joins a range of other organizations in the region, each with its own niche and scope of coverage. A key challenge for the region would be to maximize the potential synergies of working in harmony across organizations and groups in advancing its sustainable development agenda.

54. In Europe, the European Union has put in place over the years a number of governance structures to promote policy coherence for development throughout European Union institutions and member States. Yet, aligning non-developmental policies with development objectives, both within member States and at the Union level, remains a challenge and the results to date have been limited. A new policy coherence for sustainable development approach has been proposed by OECD to support members and partners in adapting to and implementing the post-2015 conceptual framework. This approach builds on lessons learned from earlier experiences. It is intended as a tool for integrating all three dimensions of sustainable development into policymaking, taking into account long-term effects for future generations as well as spillover effects on other countries outside the Union. It focuses on synergies across sectors, shifting from a "donor-centred", siloed and sectoral approach to policymaking. A key challenge for the implementation of this approach would be to set a results-oriented framework for monitoring progress.

55. In Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is another successful regional integration effort that fosters economic, trade and political cooperation. Its vision is based on the principles of an open, outward-looking, inclusive and market-driven regional economy, consistent with multilateral rules and adhering to rules-based systems for effective compliance and implementation of commitments. The ASEAN framework for economic integration for the decade from 2011 to 2020 will be based on the integration of the financial sector, for which targets and directions over the period will be established and supported by ASEAN-wide regulatory arrangements, including mechanisms for crisis prevention and management. It remains to be seen to what extent current policy coherence efforts would expand beyond the financial sector.

56. Regional development banks and United Nations regional commissions have also provided important platforms to promote policy coherence and to address sustainable development imbalances at the regional level. Regional banks have been able to promote and support common approaches and solutions to regional

economic and financial imbalances, while United Nations regional commissions have encouraged multi-stakeholder and multisectoral collaboration.

57. To collectively fill gaps in policy coherence or implementation, most regional institutions and governance structures would have to assume genuine policymaking, monitoring and cooperation roles, providing States with models and solutions to tackle challenges. This would entail developing capacity on the part of these institutions to formulate specific policy approaches and standards for each region, backed by strong mechanisms to monitor implementation and promote accountability for results.

58. Broad-based participation will be essential to this approach in order to build on the collective knowledge of the full range of stakeholders and thereby contribute to strengthening regional and global standards in the economic, trade, financial, social and environmental arenas so that global trends can be managed more sustainably at all levels.

59. The governance challenge will be considerable. It will entail changing institutional structures and operational modalities of current institutions. Sharing of knowledge and experiences, broad-based participation, inclusiveness and communication together with open data from all actors would be key features of effective post-2015 global and regional institutions.

IV. Capacity issues in institutional preparedness

60. Policy integration has been identified as central to the sustainable development paradigm and is presented as a distinct target.

61. Formulating integrated and coherent policies to achieve the sustainable development goals is a daunting analytical, political, structural and operational challenge, especially for developing countries. It entails drawing on knowledge, skills and data from multiple domains and sources to conduct cross-sectoral and cross-temporal analyses of complex issues; applying integrated approaches and tools to identify viable, evidence-based policy options that manage short-term and long-term objectives and reconciling competing demands generated by different goals. It also requires facilitating a broad-based political consensus on priorities and action; mobilizing adequate resources; applying innovative, flexible modalities to deliver public services across multiple government agencies and jurisdictions; tracking progress; and defining corrective action.

62. Institutions at all levels, including Governments, the United Nations and civil society organizations, will need to learn how to remain effective and relevant in this context. Their effectiveness, resilience and sustainability will ultimately depend on their being able to promote and support holistic approaches to complex problems and environments so that sound regulatory and policy frameworks can emerge.

Capacity requirements

63. Institutional competence in policy integration in the post-2015 context should be measured in terms of an institution's capacity to learn, innovate and adapt to a changing and unpredictable environment, make course corrections, build new capacity when needed to resolve new problems, work collaboratively across

organizational boundaries and mobilize resources across sectors and organizations to deliver policies and services.

64. "Thinking ahead, thinking again and thinking across"[15] will be needed, where thinking ahead means being able to perceive early signals of emerging issues and developments in the social, economic, environmental, technological and political environments; understanding how such trends may evolve into scenarios of a plausible future that may affect the mission and effectiveness of an institution; and being able to articulate how and why these scenarios would require different sets of strategies and policies. This capacity would enable organizations to conceive strategies and policies to adapt to a changing environment.

65. "Thinking again" is having the analytical and problem-solving capability to challenge the performance of existing policies and the appropriateness of existing goals and strategies and to reinvent current policies and processes when the environment changes to achieve better results. It means looking beyond the legacy of a particular policy or programme and questioning its relevance when circumstances change. It is fact-based, using actual data, measurements and feedback to ask questions about underlying causes of observed results. Building and strengthening that capability might require periodically bringing in new people with backgrounds, skills and views different from those of existing staff and leaders.

66. "Thinking across" is the capability to cross boundaries to learn from the experience of others to garner new ideas and solutions, recognizing that others' ideas, systems and experiences may hold lessons that, if adapted and reassembled in other situations, can lead to other outcomes. It entails a deeper understanding of why others adopted alternative approaches to similar issues and how their history and circumstances influenced the selection of policies and the design of programmes. The capability of thinking across enables institutions to go beyond familiar domains and communities to find and introduce fresh ideas and innovations into an organization, enabling the organization to change and adapt to the environment. It requires leaders to be knowledge brokers so that new ideas are not rejected too early and too easily. It also requires strong knowledge networks and platforms for learning and sharing experiences and knowledge of tried and tested approaches, albeit in different countries, domains or cultures.

67. These capabilities would need to be embodied in people, processes and organizational structures and manifest in institutional strategies and policies. Leaders at all levels of governance will be the key drivers of institutional change that engenders new modalities and capabilities.

68. According to the transformational leadership theory developed by Bernard Bass, strong and transformational leadership will be particularly critical in creating a culture of change in organizations. A precondition for institutional innovation is for people to continually ask questions about what the future hold and what the organization needs to do to be prepared. Leaders can also create political coalitions at all levels of governance that — if they last long enough and are strong enough — can support and implement the necessary institutional reforms to adapt to a range of plausible futures. While leaders can engineer change, for change to continue,

[15] Neo Boon Siong, "Strategic thinking and dynamic governance", paper prepared for the first Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Institute Executive Leadership Development Program, Singapore, August 2009.

organizational processes have to be designed to spur, sustain and support continuous adaptation and guide the operations and behaviour of leaders.

Institutional innovations for policy integration

69. Institutional innovation will be essential if policy integration is to work in practice. New forms of collaboration and partnerships will be required to address the complexities and challenges of the post-2015 development framework effectively. The depth of institutional adaptation or change will depend on the capabilities and nature of each institution, whether it is legislative, executive, judicial or operational. Not all institutions may need to reform. The need to maintain stability within a society should be a key consideration in this decision.

70. Broadly speaking, there is a need for institutional arrangements that allow more horizontal, collaborative, participatory and democratic decision-making to solve complex problems that span numerous administrative boundaries and institutions. They should facilitate the engagement of the full range of stakeholders at all stages of the policy process and work across structural boundaries to pool knowledge, skills and resources from various sources beyond the capacity and purview of individual organizations.

71. New forms of governance have emerged over the years to address perceived institutional gaps in existing multilateral regimes, in particular in the context of climate governance. The climate policy arena is characterized by intergovernmental treaty-making, civil society-led standard-setting, self-regulating transnational corporations and hybrid governance arrangements such as multi-stakeholder partnerships. Transnational networked governance, in particular involving multisectoral collaboration between civil society, government and market actors, has emerged as a response to the perceived regulatory and implementation deficits that permeate multilateral climate regimes to increase their effectiveness and the legitimacy of multiple actors.

72. Partnerships, networks and networked governance in their various combinations[16] are seen as new, more flexible and horizontal modes of governance that build on non-hierarchical steering, where multiple organizations or units of authority and power that are not formally subordinated to one another operate in an interconnected and interdependent manner, creating horizontal channels of collaboration and knowledge exchange. The institutional glue of such networks might include authority bonds, exchange relations and coalitions based on common interest. Successful networks ultimately depend on successful relationships among members.

73. Enhanced learning, more efficient use of resources, increased capacity to address complex problems, greater competitiveness and better delivery of services are among the most cited advantages of network coordination. On the other hand, critics, have claimed that using the partnership model as an implementation mechanism can lead to a hollowing out of the State, reinforcing neoliberalism and accelerating privatization of environmental governance. It can also increase the influence of business, power inequalities, skewed representation of stakeholders,

[16] Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr., "Treating networks seriously: practical and research-based agendas in public administration", *Public Administration Review*, vol. 57, No. 1 (1997).

fragmentation of global governance, reinforcement of elite multilateralism and the retreat of State responsibility in the production of public goods.[17]

74. In designing effective governance structures that are more flexible, horizontal, non-hierarchical and multi-stakeholder, a proper balance would have to be found between horizontal steering and accountability; efficiency and inclusiveness; and flexibility and stability. Government leadership and ownership will be key to providing legitimacy to new forms of governance at any level. Decision-making, however, could be supported by new approaches and processes for policy formulation, implementation and scrutiny that would allow new thinking to emerge and respond to the rising demands and expectations of a broader range of stakeholders.

75. Multi-stakeholder engagement at the various stages of the policymaking process, from priority-setting to policy formulation, implementation and evaluation, would be an essential component in the creation of vibrant, dynamic and multidisciplinary processes that can challenge existing assumptions and push the boundaries of knowledge and practice. Open and effective communication, including through the use of social media and other information and communication tools, will be critical to increase understanding of the development vision and challenges underpinning the sustainable development goals among all actors as well as to clarify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in their implementation.

76. Building the capacity of government agencies and national stakeholders to engage with the social development goals agenda and with one another on the basis of their specific strengths will be essential. Government institutions themselves might need to function differently and more effectively to respond to the demands of the new agenda. They would need to work in a more collaborative, participatory and transparent fashion to overcome sectoral fragmentation. This might require changing norms, rules and regulations that govern the way in which government ministries and departments work together and provide incentives for inter-organizational cooperation, including through joint budgeting. In some countries, this may entail strengthening the functioning of all public institutions, including parliaments and public administration.

77. Effectively engaging other stakeholders on the basis of their unique strengths to add value to problem-solving will be one of the most formidable challenges for most countries. While multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships can facilitate policy integration, it can be difficult to manage, requiring strong government leadership, clear communication and effective mechanisms to guide collaboration in ways that build trust, responsibility and accountability. In some instances, new legislation to allow multi-stakeholder engagement in policymaking may also be required.

78. Capacity-building will be critical to ensuring that all stakeholders, especially civil society and the private sector, are competent, understand the challenges ahead and their value added in the development process, and are provided with the right set of incentives and sense of ownership to engage. The implementation of the post-2015 development agenda may ultimately require not just institutional reforms but something akin to an institutional paradigm shift in all sectors. This will be

[17] Karin Bäckstrand, "Accountability of networked climate governance: the rise of transnational climate partnerships", *Global Environmental Politics*, vol. 8, No. 3 (August 2008).

possible only if it is accompanied by strong communication, advocacy and investment in institutional and human resources capacity-building. Institutional change and adaptation will need to focus on people, their values, shifting interests and cultural underpinning.

V. Way forward

79. On the basis of the preceding analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

(a) Transformation of existing governance mechanisms and structures at all levels will be needed to enable institutions to support policy coherence and integration across all dimensions of sustainable development in the post-2015 context and implement a universal agenda;

(b) To address the complexities of dealing with the post-2015 development agenda, institutions would need to be multidisciplinary, participatory, collaborative, transparent, accountable, willing and agile so as to be adaptable to evolving circumstances;

(c) Institutional innovation will be critical to make policy integration work in practice and should go in the direction of more flexible, dynamic, horizontal and participatory arrangements and processes that can fill existing representational, regulatory and implementation gaps;

(d) Government ownership and transformational leadership are critical to initiating institutional change, which should be accompanied by supportive organizational processes and structures to be sustainable;

(e) New and effective governance structures should facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement in the various stages of policymaking in order to pool the knowledge, skills and resources needed to deliver on policies and services;

(f) Changes in norms, rules and regulations will be needed to make it possible for existing institutions to work within and across organizational limits;

(g) Institutional and human resource capacities would be needed to ensure that government agencies effectively engage and manage complex, multilayered partnerships with other stakeholders, including government units, the private sector and civil society actors, in ways that build trust and accountability for results;

(h) Building the capacity of other stakeholders to engage with the post-2015 development agenda and with the Government would be essential to ensuring that all partners are competent and understand their responsibilities and value added in the development process. Strong communication, government leadership and effective mechanisms to manage collaboration should accompany these efforts;

(i) Building institutional capacity to strengthen management of the sustainable development process should be a key focus of development cooperation. Sharing knowledge, experiences and lessons through such key global mechanisms as the Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council, could further support such efforts;

(j) Global institutions will have to play a greater role in increasing collective action to address regulatory and policy gaps in sustainable development governance and put in place inclusive and balanced systems of governance;

(k) Regional institutions would need to go beyond information and knowledge exchange and provide support for monitoring and implementation, promoting regional policy coherence for sustainable development;

(l) Institutional innovation at the national, global and regional levels would be needed to bridge existing institutional gaps across the dimensions of sustainable development and levels of governance. Global forums such as the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development could provide a venue for sharing experiences and lessons learned among a cross-section of stakeholders;

(m) There is need to strengthen institutional research to deepen understanding of how institutions work across all dimensions of sustainable development.

United Nations A/70/79–E/2015/70

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 April 2015

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Item 123 of the preliminary list*
Strengthening of the United Nations system

Economic and Social Council
2015 session
21 July 2014-22 July 2015
Agenda item 20
United Nations research and training institutes

Consultations on research, training and library services

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides the requisite update to Member States, as requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2013/45, on the continuing consultations between the United Nations entities dedicated to research, training and library services on ways to enhance coherence and synergies. A comprehensive process of stakeholder consultations was undertaken to determine how to strengthen collaboration between research, training and library entities in the United Nations system.

2. The emergence of a new post-2015 development agenda and a rapidly evolving global context makes access to knowledge and information for key actors more essential than ever. High-quality knowledge and information is central to the effectiveness and overall success of the United Nations in implementing the new development agenda. Success in that regard requires a rich and diverse repository of knowledge with significant capacity to generate, collect and share knowledge among the intended beneficiaries.

3. Many entities in the United Nations system are involved in the production, management and dissemination of knowledge. Effective collaboration around identified results that cannot be achieved by any single actor can add significant value to the work of the entities. In order to develop a new model for such collaboration, the initial focus of the consultations was on the entities under the authority of the Secretary-General, namely, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the United Nations System Staff College.

* A/70/50.

15-06531 (E) 110515

Please recycle

4. Each of the entities involved in the consultations serves as a crucial component of knowledge services. The research entities generate original findings; libraries organize and disseminate information; and learning and training entities share knowledge and help to build the capacity of key actors. The overall objective of the consultations between the entities was to enhance voluntary collaboration for their mutual benefit, while leaving unchanged the existing legal status, mandates and governance structures of the entities.

5. The entities will be invited to collaborate through various voluntary arrangements tailored to the specific needs of their respective learning/training, research and library service knowledge areas. The arrangements include an advisory group on learning and training, voluntary research networks and a Libraries board.

6. Effective collaboration in the three areas of knowledge and information services requires facilitation and support at the highest level. Overall guidance on collaborative programmes and processes will be provided by a knowledge and learning steering committee to be convened under the leadership of the Secretary-General.

II. Advisory group on learning and training

7. Learning and training are central means for equipping representatives of Member States and United Nations staff members with the knowledge they need to help to address the cross-cutting and complex challenges of today's world. To respond to new and emerging issues, the United Nations urgently needs to scale up its capacity to provide training at all levels, in the form of learning opportunities for nationals of Member States, including government officials, and for non-governmental organizations and private sector entities, as well as training opportunities for United Nations staff members in all locations.

8. The Organization needs to harmonize the knowledge disseminated through learning and training programmes by improving the cross-fertilization and sharing between training programmes designed to build the capacity of Member States and other beneficiaries and training programmes for United Nations staff members. The United Nations system includes both suppliers and consumers of learning and training services. However, there is little alignment between the supply of and the demand for training services, resulting in the underutilization of existing training services and excessive expenditure on external procurement.

9. A holistic and coherent approach to the process of planning and developing learning and training programmes is required in order to achieve higher quality training programmes at a lower cost. UNITAR and the United Nations System Staff College are two dedicated training institutions within the United Nations system, one focused on training representatives of Member States, and the other on training United Nations staff members. Both institutions will work together more closely to identify and implement initiatives that improve the quality and impact of their respective training. Effective collaboration will be promoted through their respective governing bodies. As a first step, the two entities have signed a memorandum of understanding that sets out the principles of the partnership and identifies five areas of common focus (development, gender and human rights; peace and security; leadership development; e-learning techniques; and methods to assess and evaluate training results), in which collaboration should enhance the impact of both entities.

10. An example of the potential of the above-mentioned collaboration is the initiative to enhance knowledge at the country level on the post-2015 process and emerging agenda. As part of the initiative, UNITAR is developing a briefing package targeting national actors, while the United Nations System Staff College is providing guidance to the United Nations country teams on how best to support Governments in delivering the briefings. The objective of this kind of collaboration is to provide higher quality training at a lower cost, so benefitting both suppliers and clients.

11. An advisory group on learning and training will aim to achieve greater coherence between the two currently separate streams of training services, "training" and "capacity-building", in order to maximize the of the investment in training and learning services. The advisory group will bring together the major learning and training providers in the United Nations system to ensure greater alignment between supply and demand.

12. The advisory group will focus on how to improve programme development and increase cross-fertilization. It will also work to enhance collaboration for capacity development by preparing staff members to deliver training to Member State officials at the country level. The two streams of training services will be linked in order to ensure sharing of knowledge and information technology resources that are relevant to both, leading to enhanced results for Member States.

III. Research networks

13. In-depth knowledge within the United Nations system is spread widely, is often highly relevant to the Organization's work and institutional development and is often very specialized. The new development agenda, however, requires greater attention to the interconnected nature of the issues at stake. Knowledge of the United Nations also often resides outside the United Nations system, and the United Nations has not always taken sufficient advantage of outside resources in reflecting on how it can move ahead substantively.

14. Bearing these two realities in mind, the United Nations University has agreed to explore the possibility with United Nations researchers of identifying cases in which working together more frequently (and sometimes in parallel in mutually beneficial ways) in support of the new development agenda would work to the advantage of all concerned. This would be the case for the knowledge and research capabilities harboured within United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and for the research entities based in Geneva and Turin, Italy, such as the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and UNITAR. Any such consultation should extend beyond the United Nations to high-quality research teams around the world with significant knowledge of and ideas on the United Nations system.

15. Collaboration in research needs to occur voluntarily among the entities and individuals concerned, with the understanding that much will be gained by joint efforts and through voluntary networks for issue-specific or problem-driven collaboration. Collaboration will occur more frequently on issues relevant to the United Nations if relevant entities inside and outside the United Nations system and expert individual researchers have the opportunity to engage in substantive dialogue with one another.

16. The project is ambitious and involves a large number of United Nations entities and researchers from outside the United Nations system. The initiative will take some time to implement and will require the support of Member States and the researchers themselves, with regard to both the aim and the approach.

17. In addition to research conducted in support of normative decision-making processes, some research entities, such as the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, are involved in applied research to develop training programmes for national capacity development. Similarly, UNITAR is involved in both training and research. By establishing where research and training agendas are compatible and indeed mutually reinforce one another, the entities will be able to determine cases in which working together will enhance outcomes. Synergies between the research and training entities will be supported through the knowledge and learning steering committee and the governing bodies of the respective research and training entities.

IV. Libraries board

18. The libraries of the United Nations capture, organize and provide information of value and relevance to the agenda and activities of the United Nations, in particular for delegates and staff members, but also partner libraries, external researchers and other clients. The United Nations libraries are geographically dispersed and respond to the distinct functions and needs of local organizations and regions. However, there are common processes and features across the libraries; coordination will therefore increase their impact. Digital technology provides an opportunity for change and collaboration.

19. The alignment of the relevant processes in the two largest libraries in the Secretariat — the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in New York and the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva — is a first step. A new Secretariat Libraries board will be set up to provide strategic guidance and advice to support a coherent management approach, while respecting the specific mandates, reporting lines and budgetary structures of the libraries concerned.

20. The Libraries board will bring together the senior managers in the entities responsible for the libraries and in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. It will provide guidance on and continued support to common approaches for the library-related activities of the two entities in order to:

(a) Advance the missions of the libraries by raising awareness of and strengthening their role in the management and dissemination of United Nations knowledge by providing strategic advice and support for project-driven fundraising efforts and the development of institutional partnerships inside and outside the Organization, among other things;

(b) Direct a new operational working committee of all Secretariat libraries, which focuses on practical cooperation on substantive and technical issues to:

(i) Ensure guidance and strategic support for the management of United Nations public documents and publications;

(ii) Enable resource-sharing, in the form of content, people (skills and knowledge) and technology, providing high-level support for the development of a common information management infrastructure, including a single global

United Nations digital repository for official documentation, research, studies and statistics so as to ensure access to, and the preservation of, the knowledge created by the Organization;

(iii) Develop a seamless client experience through joint services to facilitate the work of a globally mobile Secretariat staff and the online community inside and outside the Organization;

(iv) Revitalize the role and the operations of the global network of United Nations depository libraries, which act as distributors and interpreters of United Nations content on the ground in most Member States;

(v) Formulate a client-oriented strategy to assess stakeholder needs and ensure the development of services and products across the library network that are aligned to stakeholder requirements.

21. With the support of the Libraries board, the two leading libraries will play an important standard-setting role for all Secretariat libraries. The board will provide authority and guidance to all Secretariat libraries, which will continue to be joined through a new operational working committee focusing on practical cooperation.

22. In a later phase, if supported by key stakeholders, the Libraries board could be extended to include the libraries of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

V. Knowledge and learning steering committee

23. If the United Nations is to address the complex challenges of the twenty-first century successfully, the three important knowledge and learning areas outlined above all need to be deployed coherently. Generating, managing and disseminating knowledge and information are distinct yet interrelated processes. To that end, an internal knowledge and learning steering committee will be established. The committee will build on the work of a former research and training coordination committee and will provide a forum through which the complementarities and linkages of the three areas can be maximized to better meet the needs of their clients and stakeholders. To address the shortcomings of the former research and training coordination committee, the new committee will operate under the guidance of the Secretary-General and will focus on concrete initiatives for enhanced results through collaboration between the members.

24. Membership in the steering committee, and the link this provides to the Secretary-General, will enhance the voice of the knowledge entities on issues relating to knowledge and learning within the Organization. The provision of senior-level leadership will encourage more active collaboration around shared results and will help to overcome organizational barriers to collaboration. Ultimately, the steering committee will foster the horizontal, cross-cutting and issue-based knowledge and information work necessary to address the complex challenges of today's world.

United Nations E/2015/71

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
29 April 2015

Original: English

2015 session
21 July 2014-22 July 2015
Agenda item 12 (a)
Coordination, programme and other questions: reports of coordination bodies

Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2014

Summary

The present report provides an overview of inter-agency cooperation within the framework of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in 2014. It highlights the key activities of CEB in fostering a coherent approach on policy, operational and management matters to enhance United Nations system-wide coordination in support of intergovernmental mandates. It also provides information on efforts to enhance coherence and coordination on system-wide preparation and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits. In 2014, CEB continued its efforts to accelerate the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and coordinated system-wide support in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda. Through its High-level Committee on Programmes, the Board contributed to the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 and the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Seeking to increase the effectiveness and impact of operational activities of the United Nations system, CEB, through the United Nations Development Group, accorded priority to the coherent implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations throughout the system. With regard to administrative and management issues of system-wide concern, CEB, through its High-level Committee on Management, focused on common procurement practices, modernizing human resources management and improving business practices. The report also highlights coordination activities between CEB and other jointly financed bodies.

15-06467 (E) 130515

Please recycle

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	3
II.	Promoting system-wide preparation for and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits	4
	A. Accelerating the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals	5
	B. Coordinating United Nations system-wide support in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda	6
	C. Contributing to a "New Urban Agenda"	7
III.	Strengthening policy coherence and coordination	8
	A. Promoting youth employment	8
	B. Addressing cybercrime and cybersecurity	9
	C. Facilitating United Nations system action on climate change	9
IV.	Enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of United Nations operational activities for development	10
V.	Improving and innovating administrative and management functions of the United Nations system	11
VI.	Implementing the International Public Sector Accounting Standards	15
VII.	Improving transparency and accountability	15
VIII.	Coordination between the Chief Executives Board and other jointly financed bodies	16
IX.	Conclusions	16
Annex		
	Summary of the status of implementation of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its fifty-fourth session (A/69/16)	18

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX), the present report provides an overview of the annual work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). It also responds to the request by the General Assembly, in paragraph 4 (b) of its resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, to include appropriate information on the work of the Board in its annual overview report to the Council, which is also studied by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in order to promote more effective dialogue. The present report covers the year 2014.

2. In response to General Assembly resolution 69/17, in which the Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its fifty-fourth session (A/69/16, chap. III.A), the present report highlights major activities carried out under the auspices of CEB to enhance United Nations system-wide coherence and coordination in support of and in conformity with intergovernmental mandates.

3. In its resolution 69/17, the General Assembly noted the contributions of CEB in 2013 in enhancing United Nations system-wide coherence and coordination in policy, operational and management matters. In particular, it welcomed intensified efforts by CEB on system-wide preparation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences, the Board's work to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and an active approach in support of country-level efforts in order to achieve tangible results. Concerning the role of CEB in ensuring coordinated United Nations system-wide support in the preparation of and follow-up to the post-2015 development agenda, the Board was requested to report on ways and means to strengthen its role to foster policy coherence in the United Nations system in order to ensure coordinated and effective action on a wide range of programmatic, management and operational issues linked to the post-2015 development agenda.

4. The General Assembly also recognized the continuous work of CEB on the harmonization and simplification of business practices, which provided opportunities for generating efficiencies by reducing administrative and procedural redundancies, and welcomed the work on the implementation of good practices in performance management. The Board was requested to report on the results achieved by the new vendor registration system, in particular with regard to the participation of developing countries and economies in transition in the procurement process. The Assembly further made requests relating to a coordinated approach to multilingualism, the mainstreaming of support for South-South cooperation and the continuation of dialogue between CEB and Member States.

5. At the time of writing of the present report, the international community continues to face a broad range of global challenges, including high levels of poverty and unemployment, especially among young people, rapid urbanization, health and humanitarian crises and climate change and natural disasters. As Member States seek to address those diverse and complex issues, the United Nations system is committed to supporting country efforts by bringing to bear its wide-ranging technical expertise and operational experience. As a coordinating body, CEB and its subsidiary mechanisms, the High-level Committee on Programmes, the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Development Group, foster

policy, management and operational coherence that seeks to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of United Nations system activities. Its activities respond to intergovernmental mandates and support Member States' priorities.

6. Transparency and accountability to Member States remain key priorities for CEB. In 2014, the Board continued to identify opportunities to engage in substantive exchanges with Member States and to further enrich the information provided on its website (www.unsceb.org). The Board also continued to coordinate with other jointly financed bodies, in particular the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the Joint Inspection Unit.

II. Promoting system-wide preparation for and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits

7. Throughout 2014, CEB responded to calls by the General Assembly for system-wide coordination in the follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Summit and the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, as well as in the preparation of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). In support of those conferences and summits, CEB enhanced United Nations system-wide coherence in the implementation of conference outcomes and developed joint contributions.

8. Further to General Assembly resolutions 67/220, 68/224 and 69/231, the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 has been a standing item on the Board's agenda since the first regular session of 2013, with a view to supporting the coordination and follow-up of its implementation on a system-wide basis. To further strengthen coordination, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States is preparing a toolkit for mainstreaming the Programme of Action into the work programmes of the United Nations system organizations.

9. In addition, at its first regular session of 2014, CEB issued a joint statement to the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, declaring the system's resolve to provide coordinated programme support in those States, improve the coherence of interventions relating to those States among United Nations system entities, support resilience-building in those States and deliver genuine and durable partnership for sustainable development. In support of General Assembly resolution 68/238, the Board also held a high-level side event on the theme, "The United Nations system partnering for the people of small island developing States", featuring the Prime Minister of Samoa and 12 leaders from the United Nations system.[1] It highlighted the tangible contribution of the system to the sustainable

[1] Secretary-General, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Bank Group, World Tourism Organization, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

development of small island developing States and demonstrated how the agencies were working together with and for those States. For example, to strengthen the development impact of tourism, a vital industry in many small island developing States, nine United Nations system organizations are jointly supporting a more cohesive approach to tourism development and the coordination of their tourism-related work through an initiative led by the World Tourism Organization.

10. Moreover, at its second regular session of 2014, the Board endorsed a statement to the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, highlighting its commitment to ensuring that the collective efforts of the United Nations system to achieve sustainable development were anchored in disaster risk reduction for resilience, to supporting countries in establishing strong risk governance with informed and effective leadership and to ensuring coherent and effective operations.

A. Accelerating the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals

11. With the 2015 deadline to meet the Millennium Development Goals on the horizon, CEB had decided, at its second regular session of 2012, to include a review of the implementation of the Goals at each of its forthcoming sessions through 2015, beginning at its first regular session of 2013, with a view to helping to accelerate progress within countries experiencing difficulties in achieving one or more of the Goals. In its resolution 69/17, the General Assembly welcomed the Board's work to accelerate the achievement of the Goals and its active approach in support of country-level efforts in order to achieve tangible results.

12. The reviews are being carried out at the level of executive heads, under the leadership of the Secretary-General and the co-chairmanship of the Administrator of UNDP and the President of the World Bank Group. Each review identifies bottlenecks preventing progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals and determines specific steps for United Nations system organizations to help countries to achieve results. The review does not duplicate existing Goal tracking and monitoring mechanisms. Rather, it reinforces United Nations system-wide support to the implementation of country-owned action plans for the attainment of the Goals, ensuring a coordinated approach to applying the technical and operational expertise of the entire United Nations system.

13. In 2014, the third and fourth rounds of the review were completed, examining bottlenecks to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in an additional six countries: Colombia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Yemen, on hunger and poverty (Goal 1); Pakistan, on education (Goal 2); the Philippines, on maternal health (Goal 5); and Benin, on water and sanitation (target of Goal 7). Following deliberations among the respective United Nations resident coordinators, World Bank country directors and CEB members on ways to accelerate the achievement of the Goals, CEB members offered specific proposals and endorsed recommendations for action presented by the country-level representatives to scale up support in the countries and promote greater coordination of agency programmes.

14. By the end of 2014, 14 countries in total had been reviewed by the Board. Broadly, the review has helped country teams to improve collaboration and the

coherence of United Nations system activities on the ground, bridge sectoral silos to promote cross-cutting responses and generate synergies and more effectively support Governments and advocate with other partners. The initiative has encouraged additional United Nations system action and commitments and has achieved better alignment with national plans and strategies.

B. Coordinating United Nations system-wide support in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda

15. As the international community became increasingly engaged in with the formulation of a new development framework, the General Assembly, in its resolution 69/17, emphasized the key role to be played by CEB in ensuring coordinated United Nations system-wide support in the preparation of and follow-up to the post-2015 development agenda, in accordance with relevant intergovernmental mandates. It requested the Board to include in the present report information on ways and means to strengthen its role to foster policy coherence in the United Nations system in order to ensure coordinated and effective action on a wide range of programmatic, management and operational issues linked to the post-2015 development agenda.

16. In General Assembly resolution 68/6, Member States recognized the intrinsic interlinkage between poverty eradication and the promotion of sustainable development and underlined the need for a coherent approach that integrated in a balanced manner the three dimensions of sustainable development and involved working towards a single framework and set of goals, universal in nature and applicable to all countries. They also stressed that the global agenda should promote peace and security, democratic governance, the rule of law, gender equality and human rights for all. Member States stated that they counted on the strong support of the United Nations system throughout all their work.

17. In 2014, CEB took specific steps to enhance United Nations system-wide coordination and policy coherence in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda, in an effort to support Member States in the transition to a new universal development agenda. CEB focused its reflections on the five key interconnected elements that anchored sustainable development in any context: universality, equality, human rights, integration and data. The Board also considered the capacity and readiness of the United Nations system to deliver the new sustainable development agenda and to enhance its operational efficiency and effectiveness in support of achieving development results.

18. The Board reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations system to seizing the unique historic opportunity of the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda to ensure that the system was capable of responding to the challenges of sustainable development and delivering on the new agenda. At the core of CEB deliberations was a reflection on how to render the system competent in contributing to the transformative agenda and to enhance coordinated and effective action on the programmatic, management and operational issues linked to it.

19. To deepen considerations on the steps required for the United Nations system to collectively rise to the challenge and effectively support Member States in the formulation and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, the High-level Committee on Management and the High-level Committee on Programmes

held a joint session on 9 October 2014, which was followed on 23 and 24 October by a United Nations Development Group retreat. Bringing together more than 100 senior managers from United Nations system organizations, the joint session was intended to bolster the system's internal capacity to respond to Member States' call for a transformative, universal and integrated development agenda by building on the strength of the system as a whole and of its component parts. The participants considered a wide range of actions to enhance the system's complementarities and synergies in support of the new development framework.

20. Strengthening multi-stakeholder engagement and mobilizing partnerships, capacities and resources were seen as important measures for supporting the implementation of the future global agenda. The successful implementation of the sustainable development agenda also required the coherent integration of policies across the three dimensions of sustainable development by building on institutional synergies. To advance work in those areas, CEB, under the auspices of the High-level Committee on Programmes, agreed to focus first on the issues of urbanization and youth employment in a system-wide examination of the ways and means to deepen policy coherence and coordination to improve programme delivery within the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

21. As the global community prepares for the transition to the new development agenda, there has been increasing recognition of the need for better access to high-quality data for planning and monitoring. The High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda highlighted the need for a data revolution as part of an accountability framework. In 2014, the Secretary-General created the Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development to help in shaping an ambitious and achievable vision to assess new opportunities linked to innovation, technical progress and the surge of new data providers with the aim of supporting and complementing conventional statistical systems and strengthening accountability at the global, regional and national levels. At its second regular session, CEB considered the recommendations contained in the report of the Independent Expert Advisory Group and called for the preparation of a programme of work to strengthen the internal capacity of the United Nations system to leverage new and innovative approaches to data in support of national data capabilities.

C. Contributing to a "New Urban Agenda"

22. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/216, encouraged the United Nations system to effectively contribute and actively participate in the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in October 2016, as well as the preparatory process leading up to it. The Conference is expected to result in the reinvigoration of the global commitment to housing and sustainable urban development and the implementation of a "New Urban Agenda". Cities are engines of economic growth that, if well planned and developed, can promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies. Challenges to sustainable urban development remain, however, such as a continuing increase in the number of slum dwellers, the negative impact of environmental degradation on human settlements and the need to reduce disaster risk and build resilience to disasters in urban settlements.

23. In response, CEB, through the High-level Committee on Programmes, established, under the leadership of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, an ad hoc time-bound working group on a new United Nations urban agenda to prepare a coherent United Nations system input to Habitat III. It was tasked with addressing the challenges associated with urbanization and sustainable development as a substantive contribution to the preparatory process for Habitat III by drawing on the wide range of expertise of the United Nations system on the issue. The resulting paper, to which more than 20 United Nations system organizations have contributed to date, will seek to emphasize multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of sustainable urban development and provide a framework for United Nations system organizations to showcase their work on urban issues. The work is expected to continue in 2015.

III. Strengthening policy coherence and coordination

24. In 2014, CEB pursued initiatives for advancing policy coherence and programmatic coordination, in particular in the areas of youth employment, cybercrime and cybersecurity, and climate change. Those system-wide activities were carried out in response to intergovernmental mandates, including resolutions 68/130, 68/243 and 68/212.

A. Promoting youth employment

25. The World Programme of Action for Youth, adopted by the General Assembly in 1995, provides the policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the well-being of young people around the world. Member States have repeatedly requested the United Nations system to continue its coordination towards a more coherent, comprehensive and integrated approach to youth development, most recently in Assembly resolution 68/130.

26. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth was endorsed by CEB at its first regular session, in April 2013. It provides a policy framework and guidelines for joint action by the United Nations system in five priority areas, including employment and entrepreneurship. At its twenty-eighth session, in October 2014, the High-level Committee on Programmes determined that the unprecedented employment challenges continuing to face young women and men following the financial crisis of 2008 warranted focused attention on that aspect of the broader set of youth issues and agreed to establish a time-bound task team on youth employment, under the leadership of the International Labour Organization. The task team is to develop a proposal for a global United Nations system initiative on youth employment to foster system-wide cooperation, strengthen policy coherence and coordination, mobilize and engage external partners and enhance linkages between normative and operational aspects of United Nations efforts for improved programming and delivery. The initiative will build on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth, with a view to expanding joint action in response to the youth employment challenge, in particular at the country level.

B. Addressing cybercrime and cybersecurity

27. As the global community continued to face challenges relating to cybercrime and cybersecurity, the inter-agency mechanisms continued to address the impact of those challenges. Within the United Nations system, internal coordination efforts relating to cybersecurity deepened in 2014 with both high-level committees of CEB agreeing to take specific steps to ensure a secure internal technology environment. United Nations system organizations agreed to coordinate activities in areas such as coping with cyberthreats and avoiding duplication of cybersecurity activities. For example, organizations are working together to share information on threats to their internal technology environments and establish common cybersecurity awareness training programmes. In addition, recognizing that cyberthreats could adversely affect development efforts, organizations of the United Nations system agreed to become better prepared to integrate cybersecurity and cybercrime action into United Nations development programmes, as appropriate, as well as strengthen inter-agency coordination activities, especially through the United Nations Group on the Information Society.

C. Facilitating United Nations system action on climate change

28. In line with the growing momentum for climate action, the United Nations system has stepped up its efforts to support Member States in addressing climate change, identified in General Assembly resolution 68/212 as one of the greatest challenges of our time. The High-level Committee on Programmes, through its Working Group on Climate Change, expanded its efforts in 2014 to make the United Nations system's climate-related expertise and services more accessible to Member States and other partners. The Working Group published a brochure entitled "How the United Nations system supports ambitious action on climate change",[2] which was written and produced by some 40 United Nations entities and launched at the Climate Summit, held in September 2014. It also compiled the 400 most recent and relevant United Nations system climate change publications into a virtual library, hosted by the One United Nations Training Service Platform on Climate Change (CC:Learn), the learning partnership on climate change (unccclearn.org/cop20). The library was also made available offline to participants through the distribution of 1,800 certified carbon-neutral and sustainably sourced USB ports at the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in December 2014.

29. At the session, the Working Group on Climate Change organized 10 joint United Nations system side events and technical briefings, highlighting the system's work on climate action in a range of thematic areas, including climate finance, health, food security and transport. In addition, a joint "One United Nations" exhibit area showcased ways in which the various United Nations system entities worked together to support Member States in key thematic areas such as sustainable energy, industry, green investments, education, climate science and human mobility.

[2] Available in English and Spanish from www.unsceb.org/content/how-un-system-supports-ambitious-action-climate-change.

IV. Enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of United Nations operational activities for development

30. The coherent implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of United Nations operational activities for development continued to be of highest priority to the United Nations Development Group. As called for in General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the subject, the Group has systematically increased its focus on South-South and triangular cooperation. More than 80 per cent of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks or equivalent frameworks include programming support to South-South and triangular cooperation. In addition, 90 per cent of United Nations entities responding to a survey carried out by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs stated that South-South cooperation had been integrated into their strategic plans.

31. To further promote a coordinated approach to United Nations system policy and programmatic work on South-South and triangular cooperation, the United Nations Development Group established the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Task Team, coordinated by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation. It will focus on mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation into operational activities of the United Nations system, using and building on the note by the Secretary-General on the framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation (SSC/17/3). Its work will include further strengthening and aligning United Nations South-South policy instruments, collaborative frameworks and institutional arrangements to better equip United Nations resident coordinators and United Nations country teams and to support national counterparts in implementing the post-2015 development agenda.

32. The United Nations Development Group made significant progress with regard to ensuring that the second generation of "Delivering as one" had the intended impact on enhancing the coherence, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system. In response to General Assembly resolution 67/226, the Group developed and released an integrated package of support for United Nations country teams to implement the standard operating procedures that it had released in 2013. Those procedures were designed to adapt to country contexts and will be updated and complemented on the basis of experience. By the end of 2014, 43 Governments had requested that the United Nations development system should adopt a "Delivering as one" approach. The Group also developed a monitoring and evaluation framework, as requested by the Assembly, which applies to those countries and is aimed at enhancing the operational effectiveness of the approach.

33. The United Nations Development Group also continued to focus on enhancing strategic planning and reporting on results of United Nations operations at the country level. In close cooperation with the High-level Committee on Management, the Group is currently piloting the business operations strategy in 14 countries in order to inform the strategy and direction for the consolidation of support services at the country level, as called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/226. The strategy is a voluntary framework that seeks to enhance the cost-effectiveness and quality of operational support processes such as procurement, information

technology, human resources, logistics, administration and finance in support of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

34. Progress has also been made, in close cooperation with the High-level Committee on Management, in tackling bottlenecks that have prevented United Nations country teams from fully realizing the efficiency gains under the "Delivering as one" approach. By the end of 2014, of the 55 measures set out in the Plan of Action for Headquarters, 30 had been completed and 12 agencies reported that they had launched initiatives to resolve challenges and bottlenecks, including by working with their governing bodies.

35. Focusing on common operations services at the country level, the United Nations Development Group and the High-level Committee on Management are piloting an integrated service centre — the Joint Operations Facility — in Brazil. It seeks to streamline key operational areas of participating agencies by consolidating support services. Such consolidation is expected to reduce the duplication of functions and lower administrative and transaction costs, while also increasing the quality and effectiveness of the services.

36. The United Nations Development Group also increased the number of country co-locations of agencies in common premises, bringing the total number to 191 United Nations System Common Premises and 61 officially designated United Nations Houses, of 224 countries and territories. Common premises lead to cost reductions through the sharing of costs and services and facilitate collaborative programme efforts among agencies. The Group also developed a common premises strategy, which aims to further enhance the number of joint United Nations presences at the country level.

37. The United Nations Development Group has taken significant steps to further strengthen the resident coordinator system. The leadership role of the resident coordinator has been enhanced by updating the job description and incorporating the enhanced planning and coordination function called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/226. The selection process has been improved and a new assessment centre became operational in May 2014. By the end of 2014, there were 127 resident coordinators deployed, including 49 women (39 per cent), 56 from developing countries (44 per cent) and 56 from non-UNDP agencies (44 per cent). In support of the resident coordinator system, the Group also implemented a centralized global funding modality based on system-wide cost-sharing, as called for by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2014/14 and by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/226.

V. Improving and innovating administrative and management functions of the United Nations system

38. The High-level Committee on Management strategic plan for 2013-2016 identifies harmonization and simplification of business practices as a core activity. In that context, the plan focuses on common and shared services, including improved common procurement practices, and other initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system. The actions under this priority area respond to the mandates set by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/226, namely, the rationalization of business operations, the development of

inter-agency framework agreements, the establishment of common support services and greater collaboration in procurement.

39. Throughout 2014, the High-level Committee on Management Procurement Network, led by UNDP, actively pursued collaboration and harmonization in the area of procurement, including a project to harmonize procurement guidance. As part of the project, staff members were trained in all regions to help more than 30 United Nations country teams to set up common procurement teams. An initial assessment has shown that some $5 million has been saved to date — in eight countries alone — through common procurement and the establishment of long-term agreements with vendors, more than 50 of which have been put in place to date.

40. The Procurement Network also continued to work on projects geared towards the enhancement of common services. A project on common procurement of vehicles established common standards for vehicles and United Nations vehicle fleets. It also carried out a bidding process that is expected to result in long-term agreements with at least two vehicle manufacturers. Furthermore, the location-based procurement collaboration in Geneva, Rome, New York and Copenhagen continued throughout 2014.

41. In late 2013, a new vendor registration system for procurement was introduced on the United Nations Global Marketplace, the common procurement portal of the United Nations system (www.ungm.org). It is aimed at increasing access to United Nations procurement by vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Furthermore, it is intended to streamline United Nations procurement processes so as to reduce time and increase efficiency. In its resolution 69/17, the General Assembly requested information on the results achieved by the new system. In 2014, the new vendor registration platform showed positive results in terms of vendor registration. One year after the launching of the vendor registration reform project, the number of vendors registered on United Nations Global Marketplace increased by 81 per cent. The number of vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition doubled in the same time period. Currently, 55 per cent of all vendors and 8 of 15 of the countries with the highest number of vendors are from developing countries or countries with economies in transition.

42. Also in 2014, a feasibility study on enterprise resource planning interoperability was launched. The study, which is expected to be completed in mid-2015, is being carried out in direct response to General Assembly resolution 67/226 and is expected to inform the United Nations system about the desirability and feasibility of interoperability.

43. In the area of finance and budget, the Finance and Budget Network of the High-level Committee on Management completed the development of common definitions of operating costs, paying due attention to the different business models of United Nations system organizations, in direct response to the mandate set out in General Assembly resolution 67/226. The work was based on an exercise carried out by UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and UN-Women to harmonize and improve the presentation of their support budgets. As a result, a common definition of operating costs has been agreed upon and will be used as a reference by other United Nations system organizations.

44. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/226, recognized progress in improving transparency and called for further efforts to ensure coherence and complementarity in the oversight functions, audit and evaluation across the United Nations development system. In response, the Finance and Budget Network conducted a comprehensive stocktaking exercise of risk management oversight and accountability tools currently in place in United Nations system organizations. Building on that work, the High-level Committee on Management, through the Network, further developed a reference risk management, oversight and accountability model, in consultation with the representatives of Internal Audit Services of the United Nations Organizations and Multilateral Financial Institutions and the Joint Inspection Unit. The adopted model endorsed the "three lines of defence" model of the Institute of Internal Auditors as a widely recognized best practice and suitable oversight model of reference for the United Nations system.

45. Previously, the General Assembly mandated the development of the organizational resilience management system, recognizing the need to clearly articulate the roles, responsibilities and relationships of the actors involved in emergency preparedness and response. At its session in April 2014, the High-level Committee on Management reviewed the organizational resilience management system, approved by the Assembly in its resolution 67/254 A as the Organization's emergency management framework. In the same resolution, the Assembly included a recommendation to expand the system to the specialized agencies, funds and programmes. In response, the High-level Committee on Management, in October 2014, approved the United Nations system organizational resilience management system policy, its associated key performance indicators and the supporting maintenance, exercise and review regime.

46. In response to General Assembly resolution 68/244, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to explore options for increasing efficiency and containing the cost of after-service health insurance, the Finance and Budget Network also developed terms of reference for a system-wide study on the issue to be carried out in 2015. Analysis will be undertaken of commonalities and differences among United Nations system organizations regarding the definition, funding and management of after-service health insurance, with a view to identifying steps towards more efficient and effective common approaches, bearing in mind the various business models, funding sources and demographics within the United Nations system.

47. The human resources management agenda of the High-level Committee on Management has, as its overarching goal, the continued development of the international civil service as an independent, neutral, highly skilled and engaged resource to meet the ever-changing requirements of the international community, not least in the context of the preparation for the post-2015 development agenda.

48. The High-level Committee on Management, through its Human Resources Network, actively participated in and contributed to the continuing comprehensive review of the conditions of service by ICSC. One of the key elements of the review is the alignment of rewards and recognition models to performance management practices. Representatives of the Network participated in ICSC working groups and had the opportunity to share their experience and good practices. Pilot schemes for performance-based rewards and recognition have already been successfully implemented by some United Nations system organizations, such as the

International Fund for Agricultural Development and the United Nations Office for Project Services.

49. Inter-agency mobility of staff was another focus area of the Human Resources Network in 2014. The Network analysed initial proposals for a future implementation and procedural framework for the Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among the Organizations Applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances, adopted by the United Nations system organizations in 2012. The work was aimed at providing a solid basis for enhanced staff mobility at both Headquarters and field duty stations. At the field level, the Network expanded the roll-out of the successful pilot project to harmonize the recruitment of local staff.

50. In its resolution 69/17, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, through the High-level Committee on Management, to share examples of good experiences and lessons learned with the human resources directors of member organizations. Subsequently, the human resources directors of United Nations system organizations exchanged information on practical experience and good practice in the area of performance management. Exchanges dedicated to knowledge transfer and experiences in the area of performance management were successfully conducted. A working group of performance management professionals began to further identify good practices in key performance management areas such as evaluation consistency, the management of underperformance and arbitration approaches.

51. CEB recognizes the importance of multilingualism. The Board made continuous efforts in 2014 to promote and facilitate multilingualism, in response to General Assembly resolution 67/292. Support for a coordinated approach on multilingualism was provided through the collection and sharing of existing policies and tools on multilingualism throughout the United Nations system. Several member organizations have assigned dedicated focal points to improve cooperation between technical and language departments for the production of official documentation. In addition, most CEB member organizations offer language courses in at least two of the official languages of the United Nations free of charge to staff members. By providing language courses, and thereby promoting multilingualism, organizations aim to increase communication and organizational effectiveness in support of Member States' priorities.

52. In the past two years, United Nations system organizations have also promoted multilingualism in field duty stations. Organizations are increasingly encouraging and facilitating staff to learn local languages at field duty stations by offering courses or providing training subsidies. Progress has also been made by several organizations in offering online language courses, with the main objective of promoting multilingualism in remote field duty stations where face-to-face language courses are less widely available. Similarly, progress has been made in the past years in localized website content and presence on social media.

VI. Implementing the International Public Sector Accounting Standards

53. Since the adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)[3] in 2006 by the United Nations system through the High-level Committee on Management (CEB/2006/3), 21 organizations have completed their IPSAS implementation successfully and obtained unqualified audit opinions on their first and subsequent IPSAS-compliant financial statements. Three organizations with an adoption date of 2014 have completed the implementation and are preparing their first set of IPSAS-compliant financial statements. Those results attest to the capability of the United Nations system to both adopt IPSAS and sustain compliance with the standards to improve the quality of financial reporting, enhancing transparency and accountability.

54. With most organizations in the post-implementation period, improving the efficiency of processes to support and enhance the quality of IPSAS-compliant financial statements and other financial reports remains a priority, as does sharing lessons learned and best practices throughout the United Nations system. To better support organizations, the focus of the system-wide IPSAS project has shifted from implementation to supporting sustained compliance and ensuring that the benefits of IPSAS are realized.

55. In 2014, the Task Force on Accounting Standards commissioned thematic focus groups led by members of the group to address reporting on inventories, useful lives of property, plant and equipment, intangible assets and accounting for assets with limited supporting documentation. The system-wide IPSAS project team continued to support the Task Force by facilitating its meetings and communication with high-level committees and external auditors, actively monitoring the activities of the IPSAS Board, coordinating IPSAS-compliant financial reporting diversity and providing guidance and support in areas of special interest identified by the Task Force. Some tasks carried out in 2014 include a review of accounting policies on assets and non-exchange revenue, and a comparison of terminology used in IPSAS-compliant financial statements of the United Nations system organizations.

VII. Improving transparency and accountability

56. Continuing the direct and substantive dialogue between CEB and Member States, as called for by the General Assembly in its resolutions 64/289 and 69/17, enhancing and strengthening the Board's transparency and accountability remained a priority in 2014. Three formal briefings on the work of CEB by the CEB secretariat to the Economic and Social Council were held in June, July and December 2014. In addition, in April, the Vice-Chair of the High-level Committee on Management gave a briefing to Member States on the work of the Committee on the harmonization and simplification of business practices in the United Nations system. In June, the Committee for Programme and Coordination received a presentation on the Board's main activities. In December, the three Vice-Chairs of

[3] International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) are independently developed financial reporting standards that are considered best practice for public sector entities.

the CEB subsidiary bodies participated in a dialogue with the Council on the issue of the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system.

57. Information on the work of CEB was also maintained on the Board's website (www.unsceb.org). Notably, the website includes the United Nations system financial and human resource statistics, the directory of senior officials and CEB and High-level Committee reports and outcomes. A new multilingual section was introduced with a view to making information accessible to a wider audience. The harmonized reporting and visualization of CEB statistics was extended to include the procurement data of the United Nations Office for Project Services. In addition, work is under way to develop a United Nations system data catalogue. The initiative will be launched as an online service and is aimed at presenting an increasingly comprehensive picture of public United Nations system data resources. It is through the classification of data by thematic coverage and organizational source that the initiative is intended to promote data accessibility, transparency and accountability in the increasingly important area of data sharing.

VIII. Coordination between the Chief Executives Board and other jointly financed bodies

58. CEB and the Joint Inspection Unit continued to collaborate, in particular during the preparation of reports by the Unit with a system-wide focus. In 2014, there were regular consultations between the Unit and CEB. For example, during the drafting of the Unit's report on the second phase of a system-wide review of results-based management, the CEB secretariat shared all the documentation, training material and tools produced by the results-based management community of practice of the High-level Committee on Management. A similar exchange of views and information was conducted in the preparation of a report on a review of safety and security in the United Nations system. Lastly, in 2014, the CEB secretariat participated in the biennial workshop of agency focal points and presented the process used for preparing system-wide comments.

59. CEB also continued to assist the Joint Inspection Unit with the identification of topics of system-wide impact for the programme of work of the Unit.

60. The Human Resources Network of the High-level Committee on Management also continued its long history of participation in the sessions and working groups of ICSC and the meetings of the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions. Through its Field Group, the Network also closely collaborated with the Commission on matters such as the review of hardship classifications and other field-based entitlements.

IX. Conclusions

61. Throughout 2014, the Board, under the leadership of the Secretary-General as Chair of CEB, contributed to efforts by the United Nations system to enhance coordination and coherence across a range of programmatic, management and operational issues in support of intergovernmental mandates and priorities. As challenges facing the international community grew in complexity, the United Nations system sought to support Member States by promoting system-wide

preparation and follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, strengthening policy coherence and coordination, enhancing the effectiveness and impact of United Nations operational activities for development and improving the administrative and management functions of the United Nations system.

62. Improving transparency and accountability through dialogue with Member States and enhancing publicly available information on its website continued to be priorities for the Board. CEB also continued its cooperation with other jointly financed coordination bodies, in particular the Joint Inspection Unit and ICSC, on issues of common concern.

Annex

Summary of the status of implementation of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the work of its fifty-fourth session (A/69/16)

Conclusions and recommendations	*Status of implementation*
The Committee recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/292, had invited the Secretary-General, in his capacity as CEB Chair, to support a coordinated approach on multilingualism within the United Nations system. Stressing the importance of early action in the implementation of that resolution, the Committee recommended that the Assembly request the Board to provide information on its implementation and to report on future progress in its upcoming reports to the Committee (para. 521).	Support to a coordinated approach on multilingualism was provided through the sharing of tools and experiences on multilingualism; cooperation between technical and language departments; language courses to staff, including courses in local languages and online classes; multilingual website content and social media presence (see paras. 50 and 51 of the present report).
The Committee recognized the continuous work of CEB on the harmonization and simplification of business practices and welcomed the opportunities of generating efficiencies by reducing administrative and procedural burdens, aiming at increasing the coherence, coordination, effectiveness, accountability and credibility of the United Nations system. In that regard, the Committee requested that it be informed of future progress and recommended that the General Assembly bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, the need to continue addressing this issue (para. 522).	CEB, through its High-level Committee on Management, continues to address the issue of harmonization and simplification of business practices by focusing on common procurement practices; common and shared services; system-wide risk and resilience management practices; common treasury services; harmonized cost recovery rates; and human resources management. Through those efforts, the United Nations system has been able to increase efficiencies and reduce costs, both at Headquarters and the country level (see paras. 38-50 of the present report).
The Committee welcomed the work of CEB on the implementation of good practices in performance management. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, through the High-level Committee on Management, to share examples of good experiences and lessons learned with the human resources directors of member organizations (para. 524).	A full-day workshop was organized focused on knowledge transfer and experience exchange in the area of performance management. Following the holding of the workshop, a working group of performance management professionals started to further identify good practices in key performance management areas such as evaluation consistency, the management of underperformance and arbitration approaches (see para. 50 of the present report).
The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to promote among the funds and programmes, as well as specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations system, the continuation of mainstreaming support for South-South cooperation into the regular country-	CEB, through the United Nations Development Group, supported the mainstreaming of South-South cooperation into operational activities for development, with more than 80 per cent of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks addressing the issue through country-level programming. A coordinated approach to policy and programmatic work on the issue was further

Conclusions and recommendations	*Status of implementation*
level programming of operational activities for development (para. 525).	aided through the establishment of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Task Team (see paras. 30 and 31 of the present report).
The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request CEB to report on the results achieved by the new vendor registration system with regard to increasing the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the procurement processes of the United Nations system in accordance with existing rules and regulations (para. 526).	The new vendor registration platform showed positive results in terms of vendor registration, with the number of vendors registered on the United Nations Global Marketplace having been increased by 81 per cent and the number of vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition having doubled (see para. 41 of the present report).
The Committee emphasized the key role to be played by CEB in ensuring coordinated United Nations system-wide support in the preparation of and follow-up to the post-2015 development agenda, in accordance with relevant intergovernmental mandates. For this purpose, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to include in the annual report of CEB to the Committee at its fifty-fifth session information on ways and means for strengthening that role to foster policy coherence in the United Nations system in order to ensure coordinated and effective action on the wide range of programmatic, management and operational issues linked to that global agenda (para. 527).	CEB took specific steps to enhance policy coherence and United Nations system-wide coordination in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda, in an effort to support Member States in the transition to a new universal development agenda. The Board also considered the United Nations system's capacity and readiness to deliver the new sustainable development agenda, specifically at the national level and to enhance its operational efficiency and effectiveness in support of achieving development results. Regarding the strengthening of its role to foster policy coherence, CEB tasked its high-level committees to enhance their efforts to ensure system-wide coordination on the programmatic, management and operational aspects of the post-2015 development agenda (see paras. 15-21 of the present report).
The Committee reiterated its recommendations to the General Assembly to bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, the following concerns: (a) The need to ensure that the Board's activities and initiatives, including those related to system-wide coherence, were in line with intergovernmental mandates; (b) The need to ensure enhanced alignment of the measures of the High-level Committee on Management with the existing United Nations legislative framework, including in the area of procurement (para. 530).	Acting in support of and in accordance with intergovernmental mandates and Member States' priorities is of upmost importance to CEB. Throughout its work, the Board takes great care that its activities and initiatives as well as work undertaken by its high-level committees are in line with intergovernmental mandates. In the area of common procurement, work carried out under the auspices of the High-level Committee on Management is undertaken in response to relevant provisions included in General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the United Nations system rules and regulations governing procurement.

Conclusions and recommendations	*Status of implementation*
The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to continue the direct and substantive dialogue between CEB and Member States, in accordance with paragraph 4 of its resolution 64/289, in order to further enhance and strengthen the Board's transparency and accountability to Member States (para. 531).	CEB continued to hold dialogues and exchanges with Member States by organizing and engaging in formal and informal briefings and presentations throughout the year. Detailed information on the work of the Board was also made available on the CEB website (see para. 57 of the present report).